

TEN
SERMONS

PREACHED

Upon several Occasions.

By *Peter du Moulin*, D. D.
and Prebendary of *Christ's*
Church in *Canterbury*.

L O N D O N,

Printed for *Rich. Royston*, Bookseller to
His most Sacred Majesty, 1684.

SEER MONS

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T H E
P R E F A C E.

BEing now barred from the Pulpit by the infirmities of Old Age, yet very loth to give over my sacred and beloved Office of Evangelist, I endeavour to continue it by committing to the *Press* some Sermons, which I have formerly preach'd. And I am not here in deterred by the multitude of printed Sermons of eminent Divines. For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a Man hath, and not according to that he hath not. Candles were made to give light, as well as Tapers. Neither are mean Capacities exempted from obeying our great Master's Command, to *make our light to shine before men.*

Peter du Moulin.

THE

PREFACE

THE growth of the English language
in the middle of the Old Age, or very
late to give over my hand, and be-
lieve of the English language, I have
to write it by comparison to the
Latin language, which I have
much preferred. And I am not per-
suaded by the multitude of
the German of ancient times. For
it were but a willing mind, it is a
good according to that which
and not according to that which
Gardes were to give to the well
as I were. The language of
the English is not so good as
the German, to make me a
little more.

John de Morda

TITLES

TITLES and TEXTS
OF THE
SERMONS.

Abraham's Sacrifice.

Sermon I. **G**EN.xxii.7,8. *And Isaac spake to Abraham his Father, and said, My Father: And he said, Here am I my Son. And he said, Behold the fire and wood; but where is the Lamb for the Burnt-offering? And Abraham said, My Son, God will provide himself a Lamb for a burnt-offering: And they went both of them together.* p.1.

JACOB and ESAU,

Serm.II. Gen.xxvii. 35. *And he said, Thy Brother came with subtilty, and hath taken away thy Blessing.* pag.31

Add to your Faith Vertue.

Serm.III. 2 Pet.I. 5. *And besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith vertue, and to vertue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance.*

pag.65
Parable

Titles and Texts of the Sermons.

Parable of the growing Seed.

Serm.IV. Mark iv. 26, 27, 28, 29. *So is the Kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground, and should sleep, and rise night and day: And the seed should spring and grow up he knoweth not how. For the earth brings forth fruit of her self, first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest is come.*

pag.95

If any of you lack Wisdom, let him ask it of God.

Serm.V. Jam. I. 5. *If any of you lack Wisdom, let him ask of God.*

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The rich & poor meet together.

Serm.VI. Prov. xxii. 2. *The rich and poor meet together: The Lord is the Maker of them all.*

pag.139

Not as I will, but as thou wilt.

Serm.VII. Matth. xxvi. 39. ----- *Not as I will, but as thou wilt.*

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The

Titles and Texts of the Sermons.

The Meek shall inherit the
Earth, &c.

Serm.VIII. Psal. xxxvii. 11. *But the Meek shall inherit the Earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.* pag.187

I will make you Fishers of Men.

Serm.IX. Matt.iv.18,19,20,21,22. *And Jesus walking by the Sea-side, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a Net into the Sea: (for they were Fishers.) And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. And they straight-way left their Nets, and followed him. And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the Son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their Father, mending their Nets: and he called them. And they immediately left the ship and their Father, and followed him.* pag.209

God's face and back-parts.

Serm.X. Exod. xxxiii. 23. *And I will take away my hand, and thou shalt see my back-parts; but my face shall not be seen.* p.237

Abraham's

The Mock shall inherit the Earth, &c.

Sermon VIII. Preach'd at the Church of St. Andrew, London, on the Sabbath the 11th of January 1707.

I will make you Fishers of Men.

Sermon IX. Matthew 28. 19. Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, keeping all that I have commanded you. Amen. (For they were Jews, and therefore they were not baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, but in the name of Jesus only.)

God's face and back-ports.

Sermon X. Luke 11. 27. He will take away my back, and turn it to my back-ports; but my face shall not be turned away from him. Amen.

Abraham's Sacrifice :

SERMON I.

Gen. xxii. 7, 8.

And Isaac spake to Abraham his Father, and said, My Father : And he said, Here am I my Son. And he said, Behold the fire and wood ; but where is the Lamb for the Burnt-offering ? And Abraham said, My Son, God will provide himself a Lamb for a burnt-offering : And they went both of them together.



*S*aint Paul was saying to the Galatians, ch. 3. 1. that before their eyes Christ had been evidently set forth crucified among them ; And yet Christ had been crucified at Jerusalem, not at Galata. But St. Pauls preaching had so painted Christ to the life unto them, that Christ was crucified, not only among them, but in them ; ἐν ὑμῖν, saith the Text : Their hearts were stamp'd with the

Abraham's Sacrifice. Serm. I.

Image of Christ's passion. Truly, should *Paul* now revive, and do in this Audience, as he did in *Thessalonica*, *Act. 17.* reason out of the Scripture to lay open Christ's sufferings, he could not pick out a more pregnant Scripture than this to set forth evidently Christ crucified. I hope that the life of the Text, notwithstanding the weakness of the Speaker, will so evidently set forth Christ crucified among us, that unless our hearts be bewitched, as the *Galatians* were, we shall obey the truth; and for his death's sake, lead a godly life.

In a good Picture the two commendable things are the goodness of the Colours, and the lively Representation. These two things you have here; *Abraham* and *Isaac* with their Faith and Obedience make up the Colours, and with their Affliction the Shades, which set off the colours of their Vertues: And these were so used by the high art of Divine Wisdom, that they are a lively representation of the meritorious Sacrifice of the Son of God.

Or if you will have it in two words. In this History there is the *Letter* and the *Figure*: The *first* an example of Faith and Obedience: The *second* a mystery of our Redemption.

Litera.

For the *Literal* and Historical part, I must give

give you a general view of the History, before I examine the particular passage of my Text.

Abraham being old, with a Wife past child-bearing, and having no Child by her ; it pleased God to send to that old couple, a Son beyond hope, and beyond nature, that precious Son *Isaac*, with a promise that God would *establisb his Covenant with him for an everlasting Covenant, and* Gen. 17: *with his Seed after him.*

Now might *Abraham* call himself happy, rich in God's gifts, and richer in the giver : He had a plentiful Estate, and a good Heir to leave it to : And in that precious Son, he saw the promised perpetuity and glory of his name ; He saw the only holy and blessed Seed of the World in his Family : Yea, he *saw the day of the Lord Jesus, and rejoiced in it, saith the Lord Jesus* Joh. 8: *himself.*

In that blessed state God made him taste the bitterest Pill of affliction that ever man tasted. Temporal felicity is like tall Trees, the highest tops are most subject to shake. *Take now thy Son, (saith God to him) thine onely Son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt-offering.*

At such a fearful Injunction, who would not have started ? for *Nature* and *Reason* were against it.

Nature first, the love of a precious only Son : Him to lose, was a deep affliction to a Father ; But to have him *killed*, but to *see* him killed, but to *kill* him *himself*, and mangle him like a Bullock with a Butcher's Knife (*מאכלת* in Hebrew) and after such an horrible fact grant not so much as the ground to the torn Limbs of his miserable Corpse, but burn him to ashes, wipe him quite and clean from the Earth, as a cursed and contagious Carcase ; Was not that enough to make *Abraham* say, Lord, far be it from me ? My Son's Ghost would haunt me : Furies would pursue me ; A very Hell would kindle in my Conscience, and not let me rest, till my guilty hands had used the same fatal knife for a juster execution, and even revenged the murder upon my self.

These objections of *Nature* might have been strengthened with those of *Reason* moving two questions : The one, Whether it was well done ? The other, Whether it could stand with God's promises ?

That it was well done, God's command did justify it. But the nature of the command might have made him doubt, whether it came from God indeed. For would
God

God imbrue the Father's hands in the Son's blood? Would he accept of such Sacrifices? Would he give me a command so contrary to his own Law written in every Man's heart? Neither seems this contrary to his Laws only, but also to his Promises. Is this that Son with whom God would establish an everlasting Covenant, and with his Seed after him? And now I must in one blow cut off all that numerous Posterity. Here is my hope, here is God's promise, here is the love he bears me! Go I made me a Father only that I might be an Executioner of my Son! He made a Covenant with me only to break it and my heart together!

These are the suggestions of *Nature* and *Reason* against the *Command* of God; Yet was not *Abraham* staggered by any. Will you know what I answered? Never a word. No great matter what you say to God's precepts, so you do them. Give me a Servant that bestirs himself, not one that stands reasoning. This was *Abraham's* answer, a real one, and to the purpose: *He rose up early in the morning, and saddled his Ass, and took two young men with him, and Isaac his Son, and clave the wood for the burnt-offering, and rose up, and went unto the place which God had told him.*

Three days he travelled with that woful purpose. Being near the place, he leaves

his Servants, takes the *knife* and the *fire*, gives the *Wood* to his Son to carry ; And when his Son asketh for the Lamb for a burnt-offering, he doth silence him, saying, *God will provide*. Then raising an Altar in the appointed place, he layeth the Wood in order, binds his Son, layeth him upon the wood, takes the knife, makes ready for the blow ; And there the Angel stayeth him. He was gone far enough for God, who asketh Obedience and not Sacrifice.

Without exclamations, without amplifications, is not the bare relating of this enough to make Heaven and Earth amazed at this Faith and Obedience, against which neither the manifest contradiction of Reason, nor the yerning of the tenderest Affections could prevail any thing ? Never doubt but that when he clave the Wood for that lamentable sacrifice, he clave his own heart : That in that journey of three days, all the words, all the looks of his dear Son were so many spears to his soul : That the knife he carried, went through his entrails : That he would have chosen to be the Sacrifice, because he should not be the Priest. Wherefore it must needs be a very strong Motive that won him to such a hard Obedience.

The Motive was double ; a *servent love* and a *strong faith*.

His

His *love* was such as Christ would have it. *He that loveth children, or wife, more than God, is not worthy of him.* For as Gun-powder fired will put out Candles; so a violent passion of love will put out and drown a lesser: The love of God was so strong in *Abraham's* soul, that the love to his Son must needs give place. My Brethren, love God with all your heart and soul, and him only: Take him for your portion: Have nothing in Heaven but him; desire nothing in Earth besides him. Then it will not grieve you to part with a Son, no not to part with all the World for his sake.

You know that the fire from Heaven, the Thunder, breaks all, to make to it self a way. The heavenly fire of God's love would master all in *Abraham's* soul. No natural interest could stand against that violence. God asked him his Son for a burnt-offering; *Abraham* thought his Son and his own hearts blood well bestowed, being given to God. They are far from his mind, who think that lost which is given to God, and allow nothing for his service but what they cannot keep from it. *Abraham* gave God his Son more freely than many give him their offerings: He was more willing to lose his Son for God's service, than others to miss a sinful profit or pleasure.

Now because *Abraham* loved God, therefore he *believed* on him : for perfect love casteth out fear. 'Tis true, ^{1 Joh 4.} sacrificing of his Son seemed to be directly against the promises of God : But *against hope he believed in hope*, Rom. 4. Herein being of a *stronger faith* than all the Martyrs that ever suffered ; for they all saw the promises of God plain before them, and were sustained by them. But *Abraham* believed against the promises, which were all cut off in his Son's death. And upon that assurance that God was good and wise, He took no care to reconcile God's promises with his command : He did only that which falls to Mens share to do, He believed, he obey'd, and held his peace.

But I shall have more occasion to speak of this ; and so from the general consideration of the History, I look to the particular passage of my Text.

It contains four things : I. The first a loving Preface to a Dialogue, *And Isaac spake to Abraham his Father, and said, My Father : and he said, Here am I my Son.* II. Then *Isaac* moveth a difficulty, *And he said, Here is the fire and wood, but where is the Lamb for the burnt-offering?* III. To that difficulty *Abraham* gives this resolution, *My Son God will provide himself a Lamb for the burnt-offering.* IV. And lastly, you have

have their mutual consent in that faithful resolution, *And they went both of them together.*

I. The *Preface* hath but two words, *My Father*, and *My Son*. *My Father*, said *Isaac*. Poor Son ! he little knew that his words were bitter to his Father, and of all words the sweetest of all, *My Father* : This word alone (saith *Chrysostome*) was enough to launce the good Man's bowels ; for it put him in mind what a Father he should prove to him presently. *Quid, mi pater, quasi tu hujus indigeas patris ?* Yet to that loving word he answereth no less lovingly, *Here am I, my Son*. Here am I, and that's my grief ; My Son, I am too near thee : Here am I for thy present calamity, and my endless sorrow.

II. But let us hear *Isaac's question*, *Here is the fire and wood, but where is the Lamb for the burnt-offering ?* *Isaac* wondred that they had taken such a long Journey for a Sacrifice with all necessary Instruments, and brought the very Wood ready cleft from home ; and that the main piece should be wanting, the Lamb for the burnt-offering. He would never have thought, dear Son, that he was the Lamb, and that himself carried the Preparatives of his death. Howsoever he had so much good time. God hath done much for Mankind to hide from them adversities

verfities to come. It is a happy ignorance that makes us walk quiet, like *Isaac*, to our crosses. *Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.*

How this question of the Son cut the Father to the heart, I leave it to deem to all the Fathers and Mothers of this Company. His ignorance, his innocency, the warrantable reason of his curiosity ; To see only how simply he carried the Instruments of his death, would have moved ftones to compaffion, much more a tender-hearted Father. *Here is the fire and wood ;* Good Lord, what a heart-burning was that fire and wood to *Abraham* ! What a furious on-set was that of his natural affection to his faith, to his obedience ! Blessed be God, who brings us not to fuch trials. When God takes our Children to himfelf, we murmur againft his will ; for what is immoderate forrow but murmuring ? *Abraham* would have taken the death of his Son for a bleffing, if God would have excufed him from that woful office, to be the Executioner of that death. Alas ! he muft not only lofe him, but he muft kill him ; Yet he repines not, *quum res erat in integro*, when it was in his choice to fpare or flay him. But he loved God better than his Son : If God will have his Son, he will let him have him freely. His Son was more God's, than his :

Yea,

Yea, if God will have it so, he will kill him, rather than God should not have his will. God's will was dearer to him than his will, than his blood. He looks upon the fire and wood *inconniventibus oculis*, with a constant and resolute eye, and a faith victorious over nature.

III. The other part of *Isaac's* question, *Where is the Lamb for the burnt-offering?* cannot be expounded but by the *Answer*. *Abraham* answereth him not; My Son, thou art the Lamb; This fire and wood is for thee, and thou for the burnt-offering, and I for the execution. Perhaps he was afraid that *Isaac* would have run away. It may be also, he mistrusted his own strength. He knew not whether he could be able to perform that unnatural office: Whether the quaking of his heart would leave any ability in his Limbs at that instant. Then he would spare his Son as long as he could. The good Man had enough to do to comfort himself, he would not overcharge his constancy with his Son's affliction.

This was then his answer, *My Son, God will provide himself a Lamb for a burnt-offering.*

Of this, more than of any passage of *Abraham's* life, we may say that of *Gen. 17*. *Abraham believed God, and it was counted*

red unto him for righteousness: This is the true language and the right style of faith; And this sentence was so precious in God's sight, that he would have the place to bear the name of it, and be called *Jehovah jireh*, *God will provide*, as you have it in the 14. Verse of this Chapter.

These words hit the event so right, that one would think that he knew it before. But his behaviour to the last shewed that he knew nothing of it: Yet so much he knew; He knew that God was good and potent, constant in his love, true in his promises, admirable in his Works. He knew that God's ways are not our ways, and that the faithful Soul must believe where he doth not see, as a Child that holds his Father's hand in the dark. He knew that the best way to keep what we have and what we love best, is to give it to God; yea, to lose it for his sake.

It is like, these were the thoughts of that holy Man: It is true, God promised me blessing in *Isaac*; but that the Promises should stand and *Isaac* dye without issue, seems impossible to my reason. But it belongs not to me to rectifie God's counsels, and take an order that he keep his promises. God commands me to offer him my Son for a burnt-offering. This only is my part, this only belongs to me to do, and I will

will do it. Let him provide for the rest. I see neither the justice of his command, nor the possibility of his promise ; but I am sure he looks to both. *Credidi Deo filium suscepturus, credam occisurus* ; so speaks St. Austin in Abraham's name : *I believed God when he promised me a Son ; I will believe God now he commands me to kill him.* And though against nature, though against hope, though against reason ; yea, though he kill me ; yea, which is worse, though he kill my Son ; and, which is worse again, though he make me kill my Son, yet will I hope in him ; I will be obedient, God will be provident. *My Son, God will provide himself a Lamb.*

And indeed he was not ashamed of his hope. A Lamb he had instead of his Son to offer : And his Love, Faith, and Obedience, were taken for a better burnt-offering than that typical Lamb. All this is expressed in that Golden Text, *Heb. 11. 17.* *By faith Abraham when he was tried, offered up Isaac, and he that had received the promises, offered his only begotten Son ; of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be blessed, from whence also he received him in a figure.*

IV. It remaineth to see the *consent* of Father and Son in this resolution, to rely upon God's providence. It is contained in these

these words, *And they went both of them together.*

The mention of God's providence silenced Isaac's curiosity: Which silence, wiser than any speech, shewed in him a most religious discretion. He was no Child. *Rabbi Shalmo* saith, he was 37. years old: But he had not his wisdom from his years. It was *the wisdom from above, pure, peaceable and gentle*, that made him thus go quietly with his Father, and hold his peace upon the allegation of God's providence: And the truth is, there is nothing to be said to it. Reason must have nothing to say either against or after this resolution, *God will provide.*

They went on. Here is their obedience; of the Father, to God; of the Son, to God and his Father. *Both of them together.* Here is their concord, and both effects of faith: For this resolution, *God will provide*, being well apprehended and fixed by faith, will set Men at rest both with God, and among themselves. Do but believe so much in your calamities and straits, *God will provide*; you may go on calmly, and never need to trouble your Neighbours, or disquiet your minds, to find out shifts, and devise By-ways, but follow those ways only which you shall see fairly offered by God's providence. For as winds blowing
from

from the West, do not hinder the Sun's course ; and blowing from the East, do not further it, because the Sun runs above the Elementary Region : So all our cares will neither help nor stop the great course of God's providence. The circles and motions thereof are in Heaven, and by their influences we are moved ; but we cannot move them by all our endeavours : It is well if we can observe their motions ; Which if we cannot, Howsoever let us firmly believe that there is an unmoved providence moving all things, for our good, if we do, like *Abraham*, say, *God will provide*, and go forward in the execution of his Commandments. And it is a main point of those Commandments, that we go together in charity and unanimity. Truly the whole duty of the Christian is contained in these words, to say, *God will provide*, and *go together* in God's ways : For herein you have Faith in God's assistance, Obedience to God's Commandments, and Charity one to another.

Figura.

So much of the Letter of this History. The *Figure* will afford a more exact and high consideration. I keep my first division, and go over it afresh. I. A Preface
to

to a Dialogue between the Father and the Son. II. *Isaac's question.* III. *Abraham's resolution.* IV. And lastly, their *consent* and going together.

In these, God willing, we shall see a clear Figure of the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and the work of our Redemption.

I. The *Preface* is this, *And Isaac spake to Abraham his Father, and said, My Father ; and his Father answered him, Here am I, my Son.* Observe the *persons*, and their *words*.

The *persons*, *Abraham* and *Isaac*, bear each of them a double figure.

Abraham representeth God the *Father*, not sparing his only Son, but lifting his own hand upon him to slay him. He representeth also all the faithful, being in this heroic action, The Father of all Believers.

Isaac representeth God the *Son* carrying the wood of his own cross, and yielding himself to death: He representeth also all sinners, by God's justice bound for the fire, and appointed to death, but rescued from it by that holy Lamb, whom God provided for the burnt-offering instead of Man.

Now that double figure doth not hold all along the history, but sometimes one alone, sometimes both together.

Let us hear what they say. *And Isaac spake unto Abraham his Father, and said, My Father ;*

Father ; and Abraham answered him, Here am I, my Son : And that while they were going to the Mount of execution. This is a figure of Christ in the Night in which he was betrayed, praying to his Father in the Mount, and his Father comforting him from Heaven. No sooner hath the Son said, My Father ; but the Father answers him, Here am I, my Son : To agree with this truth, Joh. 11. Father I thank thee that thou hast heard me, and I knew that thou hearest me always.

That relation of *Father* and *Son* between *Abraham* and *Isaac*, was as near that between God the *Father* and God the *Son*, as humane things can be. This is exprest in the second Verse of this Chapter, Where God gives to *Isaac* three titles, *Take me now thy Son, thine onely Son, whom thou lovest.* These three meet in Christ: The Son he is, *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee*, Psal. 2. And the only Son, *The only begotten of the Father*, Joh. 1. and the Son whom he loveth, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*, Matth. 3.

Besides, both *Jesus* and *Isaac* were conceived beyond the Laws of *Nature*: *Isaac* of an old Father, and of a dead and barren Womb ; and *Jesus* without the agency of Man, and of a Virgin: Both were begotten, not by the vertue of Man, but by that

of the Promise: Both are called the *bleſſed Seed*, but *Iſaac* for Chriſt his ſake. And the conception of both was diſpoſed by the Miniſtery of Angels.

II. *Iſaac's queſtion* to his Father will ſhew more reſemblances. And he ſaid, *Behold the fire and wood*. In theſe words, *Iſaac* was a double figure; Firſt of Chriſt going to his Paſſion, Chriſt might ſay, *Behold the fire*, the fire of God's wrath, for *fire was kindled in his bones from above*, as *Jeremy* ſaid of himſelf, a figure of Chriſt, Lam. 1. *In his bones*; for there it melted his marrow and fleſh into a ſweat of bloud. *From above*; for it was the wrath of the Father which is in Heaven. As *Iſaac* ſaw the fire and knife in his Father's hands; So *Jeſus* ſaw fiery indignation and terrible judgment in his Father, when he cryed, *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* And as for the wood, as *Iſaac* carried it, ſo did Chriſt; And that wood, the wood of his Croſs, lay ſo heavy upon him, that his very murderers got *Simon the Cyrenian* to help him to carry it.

Alſo in the ſame words, *Iſaac* was a figure of the ſinner. Mark how *Abraham* and *Iſaac* ſhared the burden of the Implements for the Sacrifice. *Abraham* carried the *fire* and the *knife*, both Inſtruments of vengeance:

ance: *Isaac* carried the *wood*, and that wood cleft, fit only for burning. The sinner carrieth neither fire nor knife; *Vengeance belongs unto me, saith the Lord.* Whatsoever the Papists talk of Saint *Anthony's* fire, it is the Father only that hath fire in his hand. That God hath fire in his hand it is evident, at this time; So many burning Vials of wrath are poured by him upon the Earth, especially upon this Western world; that we have reason to say, *Ecce ignem; Behold the fire.* But that fire is more yet out of this world, in that Lake burning with fire and brimstone, where the worm dyeth not, and the fire is not quenched. *Behold the fire.* And I beseech God we may so behold it afar off that our knowledge never pass beholding.

So this is the Father's burden, He carrieth the *knife* and the *fire*: *Isaac's* burden is the *wood*, and that is the burden of every sinner. Truly we carry wood continually for the fire of God's wrath. Poor frail sinners that we are, what are we but wood before God, who is a consuming fire? *Behold* (said God of *Israel*, *Jer. 5.*) *I will make my words fire, and this people wood, and it shall devour them.* Lust, drunkenness, treachery, profaneness, hypocrisie, putting on a form of godliness, and denying the power thereof, covetousness, griping, cruelty,

elty, lying, cosening, swearing, forswearing: *Ecce lignum*, Behold the wood, Behold the fewel of God's wrath; And the fire is so near, and the wood so dry, that it is a thousand wonders it doth not take fire more often. This is then that which the sinner beholdeth, Fire in the Father's hand, and wood on his own shoulder. In God, just anger; In himself, just matter of anger: *Behold the fire and wood.*

But a burnt-offering there must be, The Father will not bear the fire and the knife in vain. Wheresoever there is sin, there must be punishment, or an offering to make propitiation for the sinner. *For without blood, there is no remission*, Heb. 9. 22. *But now, where is the Lamb for the burnt-offering?* My brethren, this is the great question, This is the great perplexity of the guilty conscience: Where is one that can, Where is one that will be a burnt-offering instead of me? A Lamb in the literal sense cannot; *For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins*, Heb. 12. 4, and no more the blood of Lambs. Angels, though they had a body, cannot be a burnt-offering for me; for Man hath sinned, and Man must suffer. No meer man can; for man hath neither deserts to please, nor strength to overcome. What! will nothing in Earth, nothing in Heaven serve?

O Lord, behold the fire and wood ; Behold the Father with the knife in his hand ; Behold the Mount of the Sacrifice ; Behold divine Justice craving execution and satisfaction. But where is the Lamb for the burnt-offering? *Dic quibus in terris?* Where, how, by what means shall I come by one that will suffer, and can satisfie for me? You see by this *where* of *Isaac*, that man of himself is far from giving to God a fit burnt-offering ; he knoweth not so much as where to find it : And judg you, what despair, what terrours, what hell may be in a conscience that sees the fire and wood, and cannot find the Lamb.

III. Well, he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. If you seek the Lamb with a true heart, and with a sincere faith, you shall find him ; *My Son, God will provide himself a Lamb for the burnt-offering.*

These are *Abraham's* words, In which he bears a double figure : First he representeth God the Father comforting the sinner with the promise of the Lamb. Also he is a type of all believers : For his praise is not that he prophesied without his knowledge ; *Saul* and *Caiaphas* did no less, and were never the better Men for it. His praise is, that he believed ; for faith is a

spirit of prophecy which never deceiveth. Any one that will relie on God in his troubles with a firm faith, and say, *God will provide*, will find himself a true Prophet. For the promise is infallible. *None that waits on him, shall be ashamed*, Psal. 25.

The Prophecy which we have in hand contains two things; The thing they expected, *A Lamb for the burnt-offering*; and the way how they should get it, *God will provide*.

As for the Lamb so much longed for, They had it at their need. When the Father was ready to strike the Son, God forbade him by his Angel, and shewed him a Lamb behind him caught in a thicket by the horns, and it they took, and offered. We also have a Lamb, but a better, the true Lamb figured by that of *Abraham*. When God the Father was ready to strike the sinner, behold the Lamb without blemish and without spot, the Lord Jesus Christ laid himself under the knife, and shed his blood to spare ours: So, instead of that woful *behold of Isaac*, *Behold the fire and wood*, we have the proper *behold of the Gospel*, *Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the World*.

Observe how *Isaac* in this passage was a figure both of Christ and of the sinner. In that he was bound and ready for the blow,
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He was a figure both of Christ's obedience, and of Man's estate of condemnation. In that he lay on the Altar, he was a figure of Christ only ; for none but the Son of God could be a fit offering to God.

But when God sent the Lamb to *Abraham*, then the Lamb began to be a figure of Jesus ; and *Isaac* remained a figure of the sinner saved by the suffering and offering of the Lamb.

Yet in one point *Isaac* continued to be a figure of Jesus, even when the Lamb was offered : For *St. Austin* teacheth us, that the Lamb at that instant was a figure of Christ's humane nature that suffered : *Isaac* of his divine nature which suffered not. So that as *Isaac* was sacrificed in the Lamb, so was the Godhead in the Manhood : And *Isaac* living after the Sacrifice, was a figure of Christ's Resurrection ; for he did in a manner out-live his own death.

The Lamb. represented Christ three ways.

1. In that he was found unexpected. Could *Isaac* have lookt there for a Lamb ready to his hand to be offered for him ? Could all the World have imagined that the Son of God, God himself blessed for evermore, should have presented himself to be a Sacrifice for Men ?

2. Also the Lamb represented *Jesus* the

Lamb of God, in that by him *Isaac*, who was a figure of all sinners, was exempted from death when the blow was falling upon him.

3. Then the Lamb represented *Jesus* in that by his blood not only he made propitiation but drew a blessing ; For presently God was well pleased, and upon the Sacrifice pronounced a blessing, the very blessing of Salvation to the Church. *In thy Seed shall all Nations be blessed.*

To which you may add *St. Austin's* observation, who in the Lamb caught up by the horns in a thicket, finds a figure of *Jesus* crowned with Thorns.

Truly there is in this Lamb and Sacrifice such an evident figure of the passion of Christ and the mystery of our Redemption, that hence ariseth this excellent doctrine, That the Gospel is more ancient than the Law. Four hundred years afore the Law, *Jesus* was offered in the Lamb, and Man justified by faith working through love and obedience, and the eternal promise given.

The other part of *Abraham's* prophecy was, by what means they should get the Lamb ; *God will provide himself a Lamb.* God himself will. For although none ought to give the Lamb for the burnt-offering, but Man ; Yet none could give it, but God. Wherefore *Abraham's* Lamb was

was not out of his Flocks. *I will take no bullock out of thy house, nor He-goats out of thy folds*, saith God. God had provided for *him*, the Lamb; God hath provided for *us*, Jesus his own Lamb: We cannot appease God with any thing of our own; *Domine da quod demus*, Lord give us that we may give thee. Give us thy holy Son that we may offer thee his merit for ours.

IV. One word now of the fourth part of this Text, the *consent* of Father and Son, *And they went both of them together*. *Abraham* and *Isaac* went together of one mind, where God's providence and command led them: That consent held out to the very last; Yea, so far, that *Isaac* was bound, and laid on the wood, and suffered his Father to stretch his hand to the knife. Is not that a lively Picture of the profound obedience of Christ's will going along with his Father's will? *Isaac* might have leapt down from the wood, and shaken off his bonds. *Jesus* might have called for twelve Legions of Angels to rescue him; *Yet as a sheep before the shearer he was dumb*, .Is. 53. When the horreur of death and torments made him say, *Father, if it be possible, let this Cup pass from me*; Obedience made him add presently, *Yet not my will but thy will be done*.

Observe

Observe that as between *Abraham* and *Isaac* there was a most dear mutual love, notwithstanding the intended execution; So in the Passion of Christ there was both slaying and loving between *Father* and *Son*. The mutual love of Father and Son did not hinder the suffering of the Son; The suffering of the Son did not diminish their mutual love: But in all that passage, as in all things else, *they went both of them together.*

Let us turn this admirable passage to our use. The first thing that offers it self to our consideration is the confirmation of our faith by the incomprehensible ways of the love and wisdom of God, who more than two thousand years before he sent his Son into the World to perform the great mystery of our Redemption by his sufferings, would give a lively Image of the same in this mysterious passage. That in the ages to come, when this History and the Sacrifice of the Lamb of God are compared together, God's children might be strongly built in the faith, and filled with love, thankfulness, and admiration; acknowledging how before so many ages, and indeed before all ages, the ways of their Redemption were predetermined and prepared; And that they might praise God for the riches of his wisdom and goodness, saying,

saying, *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!* O the breadth, the length, the depth, the height of the love of God that passeth all knowledge! Lord, who hast prepared our redemption from all eternity, prepare and frame our hearts to love and praise thee for it, now and to all Eternity.

The next thing for us to consider, is, how we shall enjoy that benefit of the love of Father and Son, and the meritorious Sacrifice of Christ for the sins of the World. My Brethren, if we will enjoy it, we must offer to God another Sacrifice, but *Abraham's* Sacrifice still. For how were *Abraham* and *Isaac* disposed, when God sent them that blessed Lamb which spared the Son's life; and the Fathers sorrow? They had offered unto God another Sacrifice before: They had made to him a burnt-offering of their natural affections: They had cut the throat in a manner of their love to themselves, and let it bleed out before God. And you know what they got by that Sacrifice of themselves. Christ returned to them a Sacrifice of his own self figured by the Lamb, and with him an eternal blessing: They found the truth of Christ's promise, *Luk. 17. He that will lose his*

his life for my sake, shall find it.

But God at this time doth not ask your life, nor the killing of your dear children: But kill your lust, burn your pride, cut the throat of your covetousness, envy, malice and uncharitableness; Yea, if needs be, make him a burnt-offering of your dearest and tenderest affections: Silence your reason, when it is question of faith; Master your self love, when it is question of obedience. *And this Sacrifice will please the Lord better than an ox and bullock that hath horns and hoofs.* You shall have the Lamb, whose blood doth spare your blood, and whose death gets you eternal life.

Had we the grace to look continually upon that author and finisher of our Faith, we should never be weary and faint in our minds, what tryal soever God send to our faith. What danger soever threaten you, turn your eyes upon the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the World; and be ye sure that Christ, who shed his blood, and spilt his Soul in the extremity of agony for us, did not buy us so dear, to cast us away. Though we were bound and laid upon the wood, like *Isaac*, ready for the blow; if we have the grace to call upon the Lamb of God with a faithful and truly penitent heart, he will stand between the axe and our neck, and save us; *Fear not, believe only.* O

O *God the Father*, who hast so loved the World, that thou hast given thine only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life. O *Eternal Son*, who hast loved us so much, that thou hast given thy precious self an offering for our sins. O *Holy Ghost*, who hast loved us so much as to give us everlasting consolation and good hope thro' grace, by announcing these saving mysteries unto us, and sealing them in our hearts. Grant us Great and Good God, One God in Three Persons, so to love thee for the Sacrifice of the Lamb of God thus freely bestowed upon us, that we ever present our Bodies and Souls a living Sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto Thee, which is our reasonable service. *Amen.*

The End of the First Sermon.



JACOB and ESAU.

SERMON II.

Genes. xxvii. 35.

And he said, Thy Brother came with subtilty, and hath taken away thy Blessing.

THis day I am to tread in a Path little trodden before, a slippery narrow Path between two down-falls; The one, to reject a saving mystery, seeing it attended with fraud: The other, to justify the fraud, because it is joyned with a mystery; and thereby to learn to do evil that good may come. The Lord so assist me with his good Spirit, that, keeping the right Path, I may come to the true end, which in this Text, as in the whole labour of our hope, is the heavenly
bles-

bleſſing : A bleſſing which ye ought to conſider with more attention, becauſe it was for you that *Jacob* got it ; You, I ſay, his Sons and Heirs, the *Iſrael* of God, who are entred into all the rights of the Jews, his rejected children. They indeed, poor people, ſet forth ſtill their title to the bleſſing, whileſt others have the Poſſeſſion. But it belongs to them to look to the title that have the Inheritance.

See then here a moſt ancient Title of your Covenant with God, and ſo diligently attend it, that you may get the Bleſſing with *Jacob*.

The words of the Text bear a double ſenſe ; of the *Letter* and of the *Figure*.

The literal ſenſe, being a Plea, would have two queſtions reſolved, of the *Fact* and of the *Right*.

The *Fact* conſiſteth in theſe five Particulars : I. The *Parties*, *Jacob* and *Eſau*, implied in theſe words, *Thy brother*.

II. The *thing* ſued for, *The bleſſing*.

III. The *Judge* in the ſuit, *Iſaac* their Father : It is he that ſpeaks here.

IV. The *iſſue* of the ſuit, *Jacob* took away the *bleſſing*.

V. What *proceeding* *Jacob* uſed to get it :
Subtilty,

Subtilty, and a forcible one, intimated in the word, took away: And Isaac said to Esau, Thy Brother came with subtilty, and took away thy blessing.

I. The *Parties* are first to be considered. Two Brothers, *Esau* and *Jacob*, for *Esau* was the Eldest by nature; but now, *Jacob* and *Esau*, for *Jacob* was made the eldest by the blessing. Two Brothers, two Twins, but two Enemies, that struggled together in the very Womb. So their quarrel was more ancient than their birth, and was seen in their birth; for *Esau* being come forth the first, *Jacob* was hard at his heels, yea and took hold of them, because he was to trip up his heels. No couple nearer in blood, none more different in nature. *Esau* red and hairy, *Jacob* white and plain: The first a great hunter, a Man of the Field: The other living in Tents, keeping at home. And as they were different in their inclinations, they were differently beloved of their Parents. The eldest was the beloved of his Father; for Venison was his Fathers meat. The youngest, as living more in his Mothers eye, was the darling of his Mother, but, which is more, he was the beloved of God. *I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau, saith God, Mal. i. 2.*

II. The *thing* sued for between these two
D
Brothers,

Brothers, was *the blessing*, their Fathers blessing and Gods too. They could not have the one without the other. Let Children make much of their Parents blessing, God's blessing doth most times go along with it. Though it be not tied to it, you shall seldom see that Child blessed, from whom the Parents have withdrawn their blessing.

That which these Parties contended for, was an especial blessing which went along with the birthright. Wherefore Isaac said to his eldest Son, *Thy Brother hath taken away thy blessing*, the blessing that belonged to thee as the first-born. Let us then search what was, and wherein consisted the birth-right here in question.

The birth-right is the most ancient of all rights next to that of Marriage. For as to the first Wife, God said, *Thy desires* Gen. 16. *shall be to thy Husband, and he shall rule over thee.* So to the first elder Brother, God said, *Unto thee shall be* Gen. 4.7. *thy Brothers desires, and thou shalt rule over him.*

In the Line of Abraham the birth-right included four blessings.

The first, the *dominion over the younger Brothers*, which was also a Law for all the World, as it appeareth in the alledged words of God to Cain. David was great in Saul's Court, and General of the Armies; yet
Jonathan

Jonathan excused *David's* absence to the King, because his elder Brother had commanded him to come to a Sacrifice. This dominion of the Elder is a natural Law, which stands in force still. And as it was the beginning, it is still the ground of Monarchies.

A second Blessing of the Eldership was the Priesthood. God said to *Moses*, Numb. 3. *I have taken the Levites instead of all the first-born of Israel*; because before that time all the first-born in *Israel* were Priests, and God then began to confine the Priesthood to the Family of *Levi*. It is the exposition of *St. Hierome* and *Rupertus*. In old time the first-born of Kings were Priests; In our days the youngest of the meanest Houses are cast upon Gods service, Elder Brothers and great Houses despise it.

The Rabbins are of opinion that *Jacob* saying to *Esau*, *sell me thy birth-right*, would buy of him his Robe of Priest; And that *Esau's* Garment, which *Rebekka* put over *Jacob* when he stole the blessing, was that Priestly Robe.

God owned an especial right in the eldest. *All the first-born are mine*, said he: Accordingly all the first-born of clean Beasts were sacrificed to God. And the first-born of Men and unclean Beasts were redeemed with a Sacrifice.

Note also that before the Priesthood was bestowed upon the Tribe of *Levi*, all the first-born in *Israel* were Priests. All this prefigured the first-born of God, the blessed Jesus, who for the sins of the World was both Priest and Sacrifice.

A *third Blessing* of the birth-right was the *double portion*. It was the order set down by God, *Deut. 21*. A Man shall give to his first-born a double portion of all that he hath.

And in that especial Line whence the Messias is descended, there was a *fourth blessing* going along with the birth-right, which was the *Covenant of the blessed Seed*, the inheritance of this promise to *Abraham*; *In thy Seed shall all Nations be blessed*: And to *Eve* before; *The Seed of the Woman shall bruise the Serpents head*.

These *four Blessings* are evident and distinct in the partage between *Jacob's Children*. For *Reuben* the Eldest being turned out of his natural right, by reason of his unnatural irreverence against his Father, his Incest with his Mother-in-Law: his right of eldership was shared among his Brethren; *Levi* had the *Priesthood*, *Joseph* the *double portion*; for in the division of *Canaan* he had two Lots for his two Sons, *Ephraim* and *Manasse*. *Juda* had the two other blessings of the birth-right, the *Rule* over his Brethren, in the Persons of those glorious

glorious Kings, *David* and *Solomon*; and more yet in the Person of the most Holy and Mighty, the Lord *Jesus*, God blessed for ever more.

In this Lord *Jesus* meet again the *four Blessings* of the Eldership which had been disjoyned ever since *Jacob's* death, *that he might be the first-born among many Brethren*; so *St. Paul* termeth him, *Rom. 8. 29.*

He had the *dominion*, *Thou sayest that I am a King*; For that end was *Joh. 18. 37.* I born, saith he himself.

He had the *Priesthood*. A great part of the Epistle to the *Hebrews* is employed to shew that to him belongeth the Prophetical declaration of the 110. Psalm. *Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchise-deck.*

He had the *double portion*, *Jews* and *Gentiles*, *Heaven* and *Earth*. *I shall give the Heathen for thine Inheritance, and for thy Possession the uttermost parts of the Earth: Psal. 2.* And so for measure of Graces, *He was anointed with oyl of gladness above his fellows, Psal. 45.*

And lastly, himself was the *blessed Seed*, the Prince of the *Covenant*; And his blood was called by himself, *the blood of the new Testament*. In him all the *promises of God are Yea and Amen,* *Matth. 26.*

2 Cor. 2. 20

faith St. Paul; that is, in him and by him all the promised blessings are made good unto us. Now you see what a great matter was in question between these Suitors for the blessing, no less than the *Dominion*, the *double portion*, yea, and the *Holy Priesthood*, and the *Covenant of Grace*.

III. In that Suit so important, they had their Father for their Judge, who had the blessing in his keeping, and made himself sure that he had it in his disposing; But it proved otherwise. It was not Man's blessing, but Gods; and therefore not to be disposed by Man's passion, but by God's disposition. That blessing he himself had obtained by Gods disposition over his Brethren, Children of *Hagar* & *Keturah*: That blessing he must now leave behind him, but still by the same disposition; Which, if he neglect, God will find a way that by him, though against his will, the blessing may be conveyed where Gods open Decree had pointed before his Sons were born. The good Man is blind; He seeth not what he doth, and doth not what he would do. A pregnant instance that Mans will, though never so unwilling, serveth for the execution of God's will. *There are many devices in a mans head: Nevertheless the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand.*

IV. That

IV. That permanent counsel of the Lord which maketh way to it self through the contrariety of Mens counsels, is eminent in this *issue* of the *Suit*. For who prevailed? *Jacob*. *He hath taken away thy blessing*, saith the Father to *Esau*; And yet to *Esau* the Father intended the blessing. Never was the like judgment. The sentence was given in favour of *Esau*, and yet by the same sentence he was rejected. The blessing given unto *Esau*'s right lights upon *Jacob*'s Person. A strange issue of a judgment, and the proceeding's no less strange.

V. The *proceedings*, how *Jacob* got the blessing, are termed, by our version, *subtily*. Wherein our Translators have minced a little the original מרמה which signifieth a downright fraud: Of the carriage of that fraud the History is known; How *Isaac*, old and blind, willing to set his House in order before he died, commanded his beloved Son *Esau*: *Take I pray thee thy Weapons, thy Quiver and thy Bow, and go out to the Field, and take me some Venison; And make me savoury meat, such as I love, and bring it to me, that I may eat, that my Soul may bless thee before I dye.*

¶ The Mother hearing this, and having more inclination for *Jacob*, bends all her

wits, and immediately performeth in his favour all that a Mothers care and a Woman's quickness can possibly imagine. As soon as *Esau's* back is turned, she dresseth two Kids Venison-like, bids *Jacob* to present them to his Father, and ask his Blessing, encouraging him by her authority, and her taking the whole fault and danger upon her self. Now because *Esau* was all hairy, she puts the Kids Skins about the Neck and Hands of *Jacob*, that he might feel rough like his Brother. With these Mittains made in haste, and a Garment of *Esau's*, he was disguised enough to cozen a blind Man. Thus attired he goeth to his Father, presents his savoury Meat, and desireth to be blest. But having almost betrayed himself with his speech, he mends the matter by giving his Hands to feel, and his Garment to smell. Then the good Man kisseth him, takes his false Venison, and giveth him a true blessing; and in that blessing all the rights of the Eldership.

Scarce was the blessing given, and *Jacob* gone, but in comes *Esau* with his Meat after Dinner. *Isaac* hearing the true *Esau's* voice, trembled very exceedingly, and said, *Who? Where is he? that hath taken Venison, and brought it me, and I have eaten of all before thou camest, and I have blessed him, and he shall be blessed.*

After

After this all the wailings and bitter cries of *Esau* will not serve. *Jacob* is blest by his Father, and by God through him; *Esau* excluded, and made his Brothers Servant. *Lachryma movent, sed nihil promovent.* He found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears, saith the Apostle to the *Hebrews*: Where you must understand the repentance of his Father, not his own, as many expound it; for whosoever seeketh repentance, finds it, and hath repented already. And here is, by the way, the clearing of a Text misunderstood. Now you see the case opened, you have all the informations of the *Suit*, and I have done with the matter of the *Fact*.

Heb. 12. 17

Now followeth the matter of the *Right*: A matter of great difficulty, which no Author either Ancient or Modern hath sounded to the bottom, for any thing that ever I read. Truly if the World were wise, it should be left untoucht: We should content our selves to know that God would have that end, and leave the means untoucht. But because men have stirring wits, prone to abuse the examples of holy Fathers to justify their wrong dealings, the question of *right* must be handled with all possible modesty, and *four difficulties* must be cleared.

The

The *First* is, Whether the proceeding of *Jacob* was just. The Jesuits justify it, to defend the doctrine of *Æquivocations*. And while they commend it, yet they call it a lye; They justify wrong dealings for good ends, calling them *pious frauds*, and officious lies. *Pererius* and *Lapide* call this action of *Jacob*, *dolum bonum*, a good fraud; a doctrine fitter for the Disciples of *Plato*, than for those of *Christ*: So, whether *Jacob's* action was good or evil, they run into the curse pronounced, *Isa. 5. 20. Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil.* For if this action was pious, it was not a fraud; and if it was a fraud, it was not pious.

We ought indeed to speak with respect of such a great Patriarch: But the more the Person is holy and illustrious, the more heed ought we to take that his actions be not used to authorize foul dealing, or to colour it with a good intention, and to teach to do evil, that good may come.

Four Reasons may be alledged for *Jacob's* proceeding.

I. That before he was born, God had adjudged to him the preheminence.

II. That *Esau* had sold him his birth-right.

III. That his Mother had commanded him to do as he did.

IV. And

IV. *And that she had taken upon her self the curse that might follow.*

Whence these Inferences are drawn, That since both his Father and his Brother opposed Gods declared will, they deserved to be cosened. That although they were circumvented, *Jacob* took nothing but his own, given by God, and confirmed by *Esau*, himself. That *Jacob* being under authority, seeing his right eclipsed, and himself overawed with power, had no way but subtilty to get his right, of which he should have been debarred without remedy, if he had demanded it openly. Also that he could not do amiss while he followed his Mothers directions, whom God had immediately informed of his will, which made her so confident to take all the fault and danger, if any was, upon her self.

These Reasons may pass for excuses, not for justifications.

I. As for the *first Allegation*, That God had adjudged the preheminence to *Jacob* before he was born, it is not simply true, for these Reasons.

1. That this declaration of God, *Gen. 25.* that *the elder should serve the younger*, was not a command, but a prophecy; whereby *Rebekka* and *Jacob* were no more authorized
to

to divest *Esau* of his right, than to drown him, if they had had a revelation that he should be drowned.

2. But here is more; for the prophecy was not of the Persons of the two Brothers, but of their descent. It is plain in the Text, *Gen. 25. 23.* The Lord said unto *Rebekka*, *Two Nations are in thy Womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels, and the one people shall be stronger than the other people, and the elder shall serve the younger.* It is known that *Esau* never was a Servant to *Jacob*. We read the clean contrary, *Gen. 33.* that whereas *Esau* calls *Jacob* Brother, *Jacob* calls *Esau* his Lord, and himself his Servant. *Esau* was chearing up and advancing himself by his Father, and with his Wives, whilest poor *Jacob* was twenty years drudging in *Padan-Aram*. And for two or three hundred years after, the Seed of *Esau* reigned and flourished in *Seir*, while the Seed of *Jacob* was kept under in *Egypt*, or wandering in the Wilderness, or fighting for their Habitation. Neither were the *Idumeans* made tributary to *Israel* before *David's* time, eight hundred years after this prophecy: Then, and not before, was the Prophecy fulfilled, made of their descent, not of their Persons, *The elder shall serve the younger.*

3. *Esau* was by nature invested with all the rights of the eldership ; God had made him the eldest in effect. This was to *Jacob* an obligation to reverence. *Esau's* eldership was a divine declaration of his present right, God's revelation to *Rebekka* was but a prediction of what his Posterity should be. The Will of God's command must not be confounded with the Will of his Decree. The *first* we must seek to know and to do ; The *second* we must leave unto God. Neither must we meddle with the execution of the Decree, but when the decree and the command go together, as when God commanded *Jehu* to execute his decree upon the House of *Ahab*. But such examples were rare. For God's providence doth commonly employ mens actions and intentions without declaring to them his purpose. He declareth to us by his word what he will have us to do, not what he intends to do. God's declaration to *Rebekka*, that *the elder shall serve the younger*, belonged to the will of his decree, and had no Commandment annexed to it. But the natural eldership of *Esau* was an open declaration of the first will, that will of the command, that sentence given between the two first Brothers of the World, That the elder should rule over the younger. That *first* will, *Rebekka* and *Jacob* ought to have regarded, and left

left to God the execution of the *second*.

David a great Heir of their blessing, was more proficient in that doctrine: He had been anointed King by *Samuel* from his youth. That was a declaration of the will of God's decree: But because there was no command joyned with it, he never made any attempt either upon the King or the Kingdom, although he had the hearts of the People, and the Armies under his command. Even when he was persecuted by *Saul*, brought to great extremities, and tempted with the opportunity of killing *Saul*, he still remembered that the fifth Commandment of God's Law obliged him to respect and preserve that Enemy, who was his Sovereign and his Father-in-law. And whereas it was God's decree and promise to make him King over *Israel*, he wisely considered that it was God's part, not his, to fulfil it; and to God he left it, who also brought it to pass in his good time.

But *Rebekka* and *Jacob* did confound these two Wills. They transgressed God's command to execute his Decree, which was doing God's will against his will, and going about to help God whether he would or no. Whereas had they left it to God, no doubt but that he would have fulfilled his promise in due time: And the elder served the younger never the sooner for their hastiness.

He

He that believeth, shall make no haste, Isa. 28.

This doctrine is of great use. It is Gods decree and promise, that his Kingdom shall come. Wherefore Christ commands to pray, *Thy Kingdom come*. But it is our duty to do his command. Wherefore he commands us to pray, *Thy will be done*. Let us not interfere these two Petitions of the Lords Prayer. Let not the hastiness of our zeal to make God's Kingdom to come, cast us upon transgressions of his revealed will. That would be open hostility against his Kingdom. Be ye sure that the Kingdom of God, which is righteousness, peace and joy, through the Holy Ghost, seeks not to be established by unrighteous and destructive ways.

God indeed advanceth his Kingdom through the wickedness of Men. But they that are thus instrumental in the advancing of God's Kingdom, have no share in it; as the builders of *Noah's Ark* were not received into it, but perished in the Flood. Such as have done evil that good might come, soon or late have got confusion by it.

- II. The *second excuse* employed to justify *Jacob's* dealing, is, *That his Brother had sold him his birth-right*, which is maintaining one wrong by another. For, in that bargain,
Jacob

Jacob was in fault as well as *Esau*, to have bargained for such a holy thing as the Royal and sacerdotal Birth-right : and it is a measuring Cast, whether it was more sacrilegious to sell or to buy such a sacred thing.

In that bargain *Jacob* was more guilty in five respects.

1. Because he made the first motion.
2. No man that hath his senses about him, will believe that a birth-right of that nature and consequence could be purchased with a mess of Lentils. It is a civil Law consonant to the Natural, That a bargain under the half of the just value is of no force ; *Si infra dimidium, invalidum*. The precious holy birth-right had been too enormously undervalued.
3. It was a surprise, not a legal and lawful contracting, *Jacob* having taken advantage of the hunger and faintness of his Brother, who was so spent, and so out of himself, as to say, *Behold I am at the point of death, What profit shall this birth-right do to me?*
4. It was a bargain of a thing that was not in their power. A Contract between Sons under authority, without the consent of their Father, whose will could not be tied by their particular conventions. And if they could not dispose of their Fathers
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blessing, much less of that of God.

5. And finally, *Jacob* shewed that he mistrusted that title, else he would have pleaded it before his Father. He that stealeth that which he pretendeth to be his, brings thereby his right in question.

Truly that profane contempt wherewith *Esau* cast away his birth-right, declareth him worthy to lose it; but declareth not *Jacob* worthy to have it, nor conferreth any right upon him.

III. The *third excuse* to justify *Jacob's* action, is of less weight, That he did nothing but by his Mothers command; for his Mothers was not grounded upon Gods command. To obey his Mother, he should not have abused his Father, and circumvented his Brother: He was come to age to be wise without his Mothers consent. *Adam* sinned, though by his Wife's instigation.

IV: The *fourth excuse* is yet more frivolous, That *Rebekka* had taken upon her self all the curse. She might indeed have drawn a curse upon her self; but to exempt her Son from it, was more than she could do. Christ is the only Person that ever had the power to take upon himself the sin of others, and by making himself guilty, to make them guiltless. The very fear which *Jacob* expressed

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prest to his Mother, to get a curse by that action, was an argument of his conscience against him.

But *Jacob's* experience will shew the right or the wrong of that reason. Let us see then what *Jacob* got by this subtilty.

Observe how *Laban* paid him in the same coyn, for this is a great instance of God's justice and wisdom. As he had deceived both his Father and his Brother with a false name, now he is deceived in a Wife under a false name, and to a supposititious *Esau* was given a supposititious *Rachel*; for *in the morning, behold it was Leah*: He had born himself for the elder Brother, being the younger; Now he hath the elder Sister put upon him instead of the younger: Since he is so greedy of eldership, he shall have enough of it, even the elder Daughter, whether he will or no. How is he punisht in the very kind in which he had offended? Thus *he that leadeth into captivity, shall be led into captivity. He that killeth by the sword, shall be killed by the sword. He that dealeth treacherously, shall be treacherously dealt withal.* As a Man offendeth, so shall he be punisht. Let every Man's conscience apply this doctrine, and tremble. *Joseph's* brethren in *Egypt* seeing themselves doomed to be Captives, called to mind that they had sold their Brother captive into *Egypt*. *Hear ye the rod,*

rod, and who hath appointed it, saith God, Micah 6.9. Who so will hearken to the several rods of God to him, shall find in them feeling applications.

Hosea in the 12. Chap. had regard to this History, when rebuking the *Israelites* under their Fathers name, he saith, That God would recompence *Jacob* according to his doings. That *Jacob* was a merchant, with balances of deceit in his hands. He mentioneth also how *Jacob* fled into the Countrey of *Syria*, and how *Jacob* served for a Wife, and for a Wife he kept sheep.

What a long and toylsome service had he with *Laban*! How soon after he had laboured to make himself a Ruler, was he made a Servant! As he fled from his Father's house, so He flieth from that of his Father-in-law's. *Laban* overtaketh him with an Army, and *Esau* meets him with another. He boweth before his Brother, whom he had circumvented, and lordeth him that was made his servant by the Blessing.

And it is most remarkable that in this meeting, *Jacob* makes homage of his blessing unto *Esau*: for bestowing a great Present of Cattel upon him, he saith, *I beseech thee take my blessing which is brought unto thee.*

But the passage of *Jacob's* life which most maketh to this purpose, is, the wrestling of

God with him the Night before he met with his Brother whom he had so highly offended, who was coming in such a posture as shewed an intention to be revenged. For God would shew him, that to secure himself against his Brother's strength, whom he had defeated of his right by his subtilty, he had need to have his blessing ratified by better ways. God shewed him by wrestling with him, that to prevail indeed with his Brother, he must prevail with God, whom he had made his adversary, as far as in him was. Which *Jacob* in the end acknowledging, grew violent in his zeal, and would not let that wrestler go, till he had got his blessing. *I will not let thee go* (said he) *unless thou bless me.* He learned in the anguish of his Soul, and weariness of his Body, that to get that Sacred mysterious blessing, he had need of better ways than subtilty. He must wrestle, tug, weep, and make supplication, before he could get it confirmed.

It is true, that since that subtilty God had blest him at *Bethel*. But it is not the first nor the last time, that God poured blessings upon his Children after their great and unrepented sins, and yet found a time afterwards to make them sensible of their old sins, by some pressing and speaking Judgments.

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Let this be said, saving the respect due to that holy Patriarch, a figure of Christ, and one of our Fathers in the Faith. A holy Man, whose Example we ought to follow, not in his wrestling with his Brother by fraud, but in his wrestling with God, by prayers, patience, and perseverance in goodness. These are the ways whereby he prevailed with God, as it is express by *Hosea* 12. 4. *He had power with the Angel, and prevailed; he wept, and made supplication.* Let us learn of him then to hold God the fastest when he striketh; To seek the Lord that hideth his face from the House of *Jacob*: then (I say) to seek him with an humble earnestness and importunity, and not to let him go till he hath blest us: Let us (as he did) banish all the reliques of Idolatry from our Families, so walking before him unto all pleasing, with faith and holiness, that at our last hour we may say with confidence and joy as he did, *I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord.* So much for the *first difficulty*.

But out of the solution of this *first difficulty*, *three* more do arise.

First, How such a great blessing comprehending the holy Priesthood, and the Covenant of Grace, could be purchased by fraud?

Then, How *Isaac*, knowing how he had

been abused, did not declare that he would have *Esau* blest according to the true intent?

And *lastly*, How the blessing gotten under the name and right of *Esau*, did not light upon him? For *Jacob* by asking the blessing in his Brother's name, did acknowledge that the blessing belonged unto his Brother.

As for the *first Objection*, we answer it by denying that the holy blessing was gotten by fraud. Not his fraud, but the love of God got him the blessing, *I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau*, saith God, *Mal. 1. 2.*

And it was not for his subtilty that he loved *Jacob*. *Dilexit in eo Deus non culpam quam delebat, sed gratiam quam donabat*, saith *Austin*. God loved the Man, and forgave the sin, yet not without chastening. Let so much blood, shame and calamity, as attended his House, fright him that would purchase good ends by bad means: Truly when I look upon the hideous face of *Jacob's* Family, I must look for the full effect of this great blessing, many Generations after him.

For the *second difficulty*, Why *Isaac* knowing that he had blest the Younger brother instead of the Elder, did not declare that
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he would have the Elder blessed according to his true meaning, but said of *Jacob*, *I have blessed him, and he shall be blessed.* The solution is, That *Isaac* was a Prophet, and when he gave the blessing he was possess'd with the spirit of Prophecy. And when he knew his mistake, he knew also that in the Spirit of God there could be no mistake, and that *the gifts and calling of God are without repentance*-----: Yet by that exceeding great trembling of his, when *Esau* came to him to ask the blessing, it seems that his inclination towards his elder Son was striving against that propheticall knowledge, but that God kept him with a strong hand from revoking. And perhaps therefore when *Jacob*, contending with *Laban*, swore by the fear of his Father *Isaac*, he meant that exceeding great trembling of his Father, when the Spirit of God stood strongly for him against his Fathers inclination.

But now for the *third difficulty*, why the blessing, gotten under the name and by the rights of *Esau*, lighted nevertheless upon *Jacob*; I confess I see no humane reason. It is certain that if the cause could have been tried in a Court of Law or Equity, *Jacob* should have been cast. If by vertue of another Man's name and right I receive money, the money is his, not mine.

Well, we have spun reason to the last thred, and here it faileth. How shall we be resolved? *Ubi desinit ratio, fides incipit.* Faith must come to the supply of reason: Then, since the *literal* sense of this history cannot resolve this difficulty, let us consult the *figurate* sense. There we shall find the resolution, Μὴ ἀπλῶς καὶ αὐτὰν θανε τὸ γιγνόμεον, ἀλλὰ τὸν σκόπον καὶ αὐτὰν θανε, saith *Chrysostom* upon this place: *Consider not meerly what is done, but what end God's providence did intend in it.*

• The Figure.

Because these two Considerations, the *Letter* and the *Figure*, are very remote the one from the other; Give me leave to set here a middle Contemplation, as a Bridge between both: How can a fraudulent Action be full of divine mystery? Indeed that these two may be together, I will prove by Example, but by Reason I cannot.

The Example of *Caiaphas* is illustrious to this purpose: He was a wicked Man, and had the chief voice in condemning Christ; And yet that wicked sentence of his had in it the Spirit of prophecy. This is plain from *Joh. 11. 49.* *One of them called Caiaphas, being the High Priest that same year, said,*
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Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us that one man dye for the people, and that the whole Nation perish not: Then St. John addeth, *And this spake he not of himself, but being the High Priest that same year, he prophesied, that Jesus should dye for that Nation, and not for that Nation only, but that he should gather together in one the Children of God that were scattered abroad.* There you have together the wicked meaning of Caiaphas, and the sacred meaning of the Holy Ghost, and with Satans motion the conduct of God's Spirit. Thus in *Sampson's* taking a Wife among the *Philistins*, there is together a disobedience to God's express command, and a mysterious figure that Christ should get to himself a Spouse, that is, a Church, among the Gentiles.

Likewise in the history which we have now in hand, there is together *Jacob's* Subtilty, and God's Mystery; a fraudulent, but yet a Prophetical proceeding. Little thought the *Roman* Souldiers by casting Lots upon the Robe of *Jesus*, and by piercing his side, to fulfil Prophecies; or the *Jews* by the murdering of him, to work for the Worlds Salvation. Little thought *Jacob* by his subtilty to give a figure of that Salvation. *Mysterium fuit ex parte Dei, sed mendacium ex parte Jacobi; At mysterium non excusat mendacium, cum Jacob ignoraverit mysterium.*

A Text of St. *Austin*, whereby God gave me the greatest light in this matter. *It was* (saith he) *on God's part a mystery, but on Jacob's part a lye: yet the mystery doth not excuse the lye, since Jacob was ignorant of the mystery.*

Having thus made way to the figure of this history, I find in it *four* Mysteries.

I. The *first*, that *Esau* was a figure of the *Jews*, *Jacob* of the *Gentiles*. For as *Esau* was turned out of his birth right, and *Jacob* admitted into it; So the *Jews*, the eldest in the Covenant, were deprived of their eldership; and the *Gentiles*, the younger People, yea that were *accounted no people*, were received into that right, according to Christ's sentence, *the first shall be last, and the last shall be first*. And as *Jacob* was blest by the name of *Esau*; so are the *Gentiles* under the name of *Israel*. Wherefore the converted *Gentiles* are called the *Israel of God*, *Gal. 6. 16.* and the Believers the *seed of Abraham*, *Rom. 4. 16.*

II. The *second* mystery is, that the spiritual saving blessing is not gotten by nature. It is not by nature but by grace that we get God's blessing. *Esau* had the Eldership of nature, *Jacob* that of grace: For though in
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asking the blessing he was fraudulent, in the main course of his life he was gracious; *Esau* ungracious and profane. Yet say I not, that he got the Blessing by the inherent Grace in him; for it is by the goodness and operation of the Giver of Grace, that gracious Men get the saving Eldership.

III. In this also that seemeth so contrary to reason, there is a great mystery, That whilest *Esau* was busie about a duty of obedience, hunting for his Father; *Jacob*, who was about an action of deceit, was blessed: This is a figure, how the Jews were rejected while they hunted the blessing by the works of the Law, and the Gentiles had the blessing graciously bestowed upon them while they were in their sins; that where sin abounded, there Grace might abound much more. This mystery I have learned of *St. Paul*, who, *Rom. 9. 30.* after he had much insisted upon the history of *Jacob* and *Esau*, concludeth in these words, *What shall we say then? That the Gentiles which followed not after righteousness, have attained unto righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith; But Israel which followed after the Law of righteousness have not attained unto the law of righteousness.* A Text speaking of the choice of Nations, not of persons: And yet teaching every person, that none must

must hope to deserve the blessing by his works. And though none shall have it without works, yet it is the righteousness of faith (that is) the righteousness of Christ embraced by faith, which must get it; not the righteousness of the Law, which faith, *Do this, and thou shalt live.*

But that mercy to the Gentiles, great sinners, is no warrant for any to live in sin, and hope for a blessing. For whereas God pitied sinners among the Gentiles that knew not his will; he punished the proud Jews that knew his will, but would serve him according to their own, yea, and challenged a reward for disannulling God's command by their Tradition,

IV. But the *fourth* mystery is the most noble and comfortable. For the birth-right of *Esau* is a figure of that of Christ; his Eldership, I say, not his Person. And so *Esau's* advantage to be the beloved of his Father. For the Lord Jesus is the first-born of God, so called under *David's* name in that Prophetical Hymn, the 89. Psalm. And he is God's beloved Son in whom he is well pleased, *Matth. 3. 17.* In these qualities only *Esau* is a Figure of Christ.

And as for *Jacob* he is a figure of the sinner, who in the name of Jesus his Elder Brother, obtaineth the Eternal blessing. And truly

truly the sin which *Jacob* committed at that time made him a fit Figure of the sinner. See how God fetcheth good out of evil ; This very sin serveth to make up the mystery. Compare now the history with the figure.

Jacob presents himself to his Father, taking the name of *Esau* his elder Brother, and the beloved Son. The sinner also is going to God his Father, taking the name of *Jesus* his elder Brother, and the well-beloved of his eternal Father. Yet the sinner is not soon perswaded to go to God. He is kept back with fear : He saith, as *Jacob*, *Oh if my Father feel me !* For sure if God feel us, and take us for such as we are in our selves, we shall *draw upon us a curse, and not a blessing.*

In that perplexity here is for us *savoury meat such as our Father loveth*, the Sacrifice of our Saviour *Jesus*, the *Lamb without blemish, and without spot* ; and with that dish the penitent sinner shall be sure to be accepted. *Jacob* indeed presented a Kid, not a Lamb ; but Kids went for Lambs in the Passeeover, and were alike figures of the Lamb of God.

Observe that this Kid was of his Fathers Flocks, to shew that we cannot obtain our heavenly Fathers blessing with any thing but his own. We must not hunt it abroad
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like *Esau*. That which we present to him must be his own. Nothing is meritorious before God but the Lamb of God.

Our obedience indeed is acceptable unto God and conferreth to our glory. None of our good works shall be unrewarded before God: But when we claim the blessing of Salvation by merit, and to be justified before God; Then our obedience comes as unseasonable before his justice, as the dish of *Esau* which was served after Dinner.

What more? Faith covereth us with the robe of our eldest Brother, that precious robe of righteousness dyed in the blood of Jesus Christ, and makes our neck, hands, and all like unto him by a holy disguise of imputation.

The sinner thus disguised goeth to God, and saith, *My Father*: and the Father answers him, *Here am I, my Son*. And when the Father saith, *Who art thou my Son?* he takes confidently the name of his elder brother; yea and makes bold to say, as *Jacob*, *I have done as thou baddest me*: And although he hath done nothing so, yet is he believed, because he speaks it in the name of his elder Brother, who had done so indeed.

And as *Jacob*, presenting his Venison to his Father, said, *The Lord God hath brought it unto me*. Likewise when we present unto God the Sacrifice of his Son, we may say
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that God brought it unto us. Lord, take that which is thine own. This satisfaction was gotten for us by thy Son, and brought unto us by thy good Spirit.

After that, if our Father feel us, as *Isaac* did *Jacob*, he shall feel over us his Sons merit, and smell that Priestly robe of his elder Sons holiness, and so kifs us, and say, *Here is the smell of my Son, as of a Field which the Lord hath blessed.*

For all this the sinner is never thoroughly disguised. He hath always too much of his own to be known. But (Oh the deepness and sweetness of this divine mystery.) Our Father beaveth himself with us, as if he were blind like *Isaac*. He will not see. He winks at our unlikeness. He will wittingly mistake us for his elder Son. Poor sinners that we are, we have the voice of *Jacob*; and while we ask in the name of our Elder Brother, we give to our Petition the tone of our infirmity. But we have *the hands of Esau*, the works and obedience of Christ our Elder brother, now made our own: The last excuseth the first. The voice of *Jacob* with the hands of *Esau*, the prayer of the sinner with the obedience of his elder brother, will prevail, and so shall he be blessed, even with the blessing of the Text, *The Lord give thee of the dew of Heaven, and of the fatness of the earth*; the dew of Heaven

ven before the fatness of the earth, to teach us to seek the Kingdom of God and the righteousness thereof before temporal interests. And yet this very *fat of the Earth* signifieth the spiritual abundance attending the justifying blessing. Thus Lord Jesus, thy Brother is come with subtilty, and hath taken to himself thy blessing.

But because the Lord Jesus is not angry afterwards at our taking of his blessing; for it was himself that put us upon that course, and by our taking of his blessing is not deprived of it: Therefore the mystery goes no further than the taking of the blessing; And at this point of blessing, the Mystery ends, and so do I.

The End of the Second Sermon.

Add

Add to your Faith Vertue.

SERMON III.

2 Pet. I. 5.

And besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith vertue, and to vertue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance.

THE *Promises* of the Gospel are accepted even by hard and impenitent hearts; But the *Commandments* of God find not the like entertainment. Many that hear with pleasure the *glad tidings* of the *Salvation* offered by Jesus Christ, cannot abide to hear the necessary *duties* to enjoy it.

But it is in vain to think on the one without the other. And after we have announced to you, with St. Paul, *Tit. 2. 11.* that *the grace of God which bringeth salvation*
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hath appeared unto all men, we must tell you with the same breath that which followeth, Teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world.

Such is our Apostles order in my Text. For these words, *And besides this*, oblige me to begin somewhat besides my Text. The Apostle having represented to Christians, in the two precedent Verses, what God *had done* for them, declareth in this Text, what he *expects* of them. What he *hath done* for us is exprest in these magnificent terms: *The divine power hath given us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and vertue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*

So much God doth for us; Much above all that we can either ask or think; but yet not enough to excuse us from *doing* our part. It is not relying upon these great and precious promises that will serve our turn, without giving all diligence to obey the Commandments of him that giveth these good promises. There is a [*besides this:*] *And besides this* (saith he) *giving all diligence, add to your faith vertue, and to vertue knowledge, and*

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to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity. It seems he will never have done heaping vertues one upon the neck of another. And indeed it is a task that must never be ended, till we have quite done with the World, and with our lives, still giving diligence, and adding still vertue to faith, and knowledge to vertue, and so making to our selves stairs of vertues to Heaven.

These *Vertues* are those Pearls of great price, for which a Man must sell all that he hath, and buy them. Of these *eight* Pearls I have taken the first *four* to weigh and consider, with God's assistance. *Faith, Vertue, Knowledge, Temperance.* And there is a string that threds these Pearls, and must go along in the exposition of each part: *Viz. Give all diligence to add.* This would be understood as many times repeated as there are Vertues mentioned: Give all diligence to add to your faith vertue; Give all diligence to add to vertue knowledge; Give all diligence to add to knowledge temperance. And here is for you such a Necklace of Pearls, as *Solomon* would have to be an ornament of grace about your Head, and chains about your Neck. Now these Pearls are so curiously strung together, that the

latter hath a relation to all the former, Vertue to Faith ; Knowledge, to Faith and Vertue ; Temperance, to Faith, Vertue and Knowledge. But they would be viewed severally and insisted upon with maturity.

I. As for the *first*, which is *Faith*, the truth is, my Text doth not greatly require an exposition of it. It is well if my Audience do not. For faith is not here commanded but presupposed. St. Peter faith not, Give diligence to *get faith*, but to *add to your faith*. In the first Verse of the Epistle, he addresseth himself to those that *have the like precious faith with him*, to none else ; He accounteth none worthy or capable of his doctrine but the faithful. And now whether the Apostle writes to you, or not ; And whether instead of saying, *Add to your faith*, we should not say, *Get ye some faith*, I leave it to the several consciences. But if never before, yet now, let us labour to get faith, and learn what faith is.

The Faith required here is *justifying* Faith, well grounded upon that doctrine of faith, of which the Apostle spake in the first verse (for there the *word* of faith signifies the *doctrine*) that precious doctrine of faith, whereby the *divine power gives us all things that pertain unto life and godliness*. The personal faith grounded upon that doctrine of faith,
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is a recourse to the mercy of God by the merits of Jesus Christ, a sure mercy promised in the Gospel, that *whosoever believeth on him, shall not perish but have everlasting life.* Upon which promise the faithful conscience assumeth thus, Now I believe on Jesus Christ; and hence draweth this conclusion, Then I shall not perish but have everlasting life. Justifying faith is nothing else but that Syllogism.

This doctrine which is the plain ground and the A. B. C. of the Gospel, is grown an intricate matter by too much explication. Some confine Faith to the understanding, and make it no more but a *firm assent of the understanding to the truth of God.* It is the faint and languid definition which Bellarmin and too many with him give to Faith: A definition which barreth confidence and personal application from the nature of Faith.

Others will acknowledge no other faith but a *certain confidence*, without the least wavering, *that Christ is ours and his merits*, and exclude from the number of the faithful all such as doubt. Both are in fault and run to opposite extremes.

As for that faith confined to the *assent of the understanding*; If we must only believe that St. Luke and St. John have truly related the history of Christ's Passion, and must

not attempt to lay our whole trust on the merit of it, nor apply it to our selves for fear of presumption, certainly we are in an ill case ; In no better case than the Devil, for he believeth the truth of God's promises, but dares not apply them to himself.

And as for the *full confidence* in God's mercy through Jesus Christ *without any doubting*, it is indeed the highest degree of faith, if it be upon good ground. Blessed and holy is he that hath that right confidence. And then it will be right when it worketh love, humility and repentance in the heart. That full confidence we must all aim unto, and never leave till we obtain it. But as handsomness and strength are not the essence, but the perfection of man's body ; likewise a full confidence of our salvation upon good ground, is not the essence but the perfection of faith. So that as you would not deny a Child or a lame Man to be a true Man ; Likewise you must not deny a trembling or a halting faith to be a true faith, when a good soul saith, *Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief.* For observe that he that spake so, obtained of the Lord what he would have. To teach us, that the humble penitent soul that can but take his recourse unto Christ, hath faith enough to obtain his mercy.

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These two acts of faith must be distinguished, The *direct* act, which embraceth the mercy of God through Jesus Christ; And the *reflected* act, which is the assurance and comfort that the soul feeleth by embracing the mercy of God in Jesus Christ.

The *justifying act* of faith is the *direct* act, not the *reflected*. For it is evident, that we are justified before God, because we embrace the mercy of God through the merits of Jesus Christ, not by the assurance and comfort arising out of it in our consciences. Wherefore it is a very ill consequence to say, I have no *comfort*, therefore I have no *faith*; for you are not justified by your comfort in God's mercy through Jesus Christ, but by our recourse to it. Were this well apprehended, it would ease many troubled consciences. *Come unto me*, saith Christ, *all ye that labour and are heavy laden*, Matth. 11. 28. Coming to Christ with a contrite heart, labouring and heavy laden, is believing on him; and many believe to *salvation*, that believe not yet to *comfort*. In effect coming to Christ in the style of Christ is believing on him. *Him that cometh to me*, I will in no wise cast out, saith he, Joh. 6. 37. And two Verses before, *He that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth in me shall never thirst*. So in the sense of the Lord Jesus, coming to him and believing

ving on him are all one. And they that come to him as the true and sole object of their faith, are certainly justified, though they be not presently comforted. They are justified by faith, when they believe not their own faith.

Let us be Disciples of the Disciples of Christ, learning of them to pray to him; *Lord increase our faith*; there being no essential want in the world, either for the spiritual or the temporal, but comes for want of faith. Let him that mistrusteth God's mercy, have recourse nevertheless unto that mercy. Let him hope against hope. Let him wrestle, as *Jacob*, by a holy obstinacy, and not let the Lord go till he hath got a blessing. Yea he that hath the right faith, let him get it again. As you love God, as you love your own salvation, let that ground be once fast. It is the life of the Soul. It is the ground-work of all virtues. Even for the world it is the spring of wealth and content. Wherefore it is laid down here first of all, as the foundation upon which all goodness and happiness are built. All instructions raised in the Soul, and not upon this ground, are built upon sand, and will end in ruine. So much for *faith*.

II. Now when we have once faith we
have

Serm.III. *Add to your Faith Vertue.* 73

have not done; *Besides this* (saith our Apostle) *we must give all diligence to add to our faith, vertue;* For *faith* is the *life* of the soul, and *Vertue* is the *pulse* and *activity* of the soul. Life is an active principle; It will be doing. You may be sure that there is no life of faith, where there is no activity of vertue.

The Greek word for *vertue* signifieth properly *valour in war*; ἀρετὴν ab "Apos. St. Peter then would have us to add to our faith constancy and courage, as St. Paul charged *Timothy to fight the good fight of faith*, 1 Tim. 6. 2. and 2 Tim. 2. 3. he will have him to be *strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus*. A fit lesson for all Christians, especially for those that are of *Timothy's Order*; For Ministers being more aimed at by the oppositions of the Devil and the world, have more need to put on the whole armour of God, and to add to their faith, vertue and resolution.

But we must leave to *Vertue* a larger extent, her full extent, taking it for the whole work of sanctification. Of which although Faith be also a part, it may be distinguished (as it is distinct indeed) from other parts of sanctification, in two things: 1. That faith justifieth us before God, which other vertues do not: 2. And that it is not only a part of sanctification, but also the cause
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of it, and sits as a Mother in the Family of Vertues.

But as Faith and Vertue are distinct here, they are here conjoyned also, *Add to your Faith, Vertue.* St. Peter will have them to go together. And the truth is, they hold together very close; for the same faith that justifieth us, doth also sanctifie us. Yea by the very act of justification we are sanctified; for he that faithfully apprehends and applieth to himself the mercy of God and the righteousness of Christ, is thereby, *ipso facto*, toucht with an unfeigned humility, and with a fervent love of God. And these are the two principal vertues growing upon the stock of faith, which afterwards multiply and branch themselves into all good habits and good acts.

You see what great cause St. Peter had to command us to joyn to our faith vertue, since they are so conjunct by nature, that faith cannot work one of her main offices, which is, to embrace Christ and justifie the conscience, without doing together her other great work, which is to produce Vertue, even humility and love; for without them, trust in God's mercy would not be faith, but presumption and madness.

Which near conjunction made many to say, that we are justified by being sanctified; that is, in other terms, that we are justified
by

by works: which if we admit, fare you well with the Gospel, we are fallen to the conditions of the Law.

Indeed the justifying act of faith is a good work, yet it justifieth not the conscience because it is a good work, but because it layeth hold on Jesus Christ who is the Lord our righteousness. It is by vertue of the object not of the action of faith, that we are justified.

This temper then must be kept, To acknowledge that Faith and Vertue are inseparable; And that Faith doth not justify except it sanctifie: But we must take heed of saying, that by being sanctified we are justified, or that our works bear any share in our justification.

But that we confound not the doctrines of justification and sanctification, we must not confound the words as some do. *Hold fast the form of sound words, 2 Tim. 1. 13.* A necessary doctrine for Divines at all times. For it is the ordinary method of Satan, when he will bring in new doctrines, to bring forth new words, or alter the signification of the old.

Then to retain the right form and the right use of sound words, this precept of *Adding to our faith vertue*, is as good as saying, *Shew me thy faith by thy works.* For we must make our faith an obligation to vertue,
and

and our vertue a necessary consequence of our faith. Truly if we did rightly apprehend the nature and the necessary consequences of faith, we should never be deceived in examining whether we be in the faith, nor slack in the work of our regeneration, when we find that we have faith. Such is the efficacy of faith, that by it we are accounted dead to sin in the death of Christ, and risen to righteousness in his resurrection. Upon which *St. Paul* insisteth very much in the sixth Chapter of the Epistle to the *Romans*. And the drift of that doctrine is in the second Verse, *If we be dead to sin, how shall we live any longer therein?*

Our Christian duty calls us to examine whether we be dead to sin by our faith into Christ, dead for our sins. Whether we have buried our old Man in his Grave. Whether we be risen to righteousness in his resurrection. Whether we have added at least some vertue to our faith, that we may know whether we have any faith at all. Have we been patient in injuries, sober and holy in our conversation, just in our dealings, charitable not only in our deeds, but in our words and judgments? Have we sometimes taken our selves in hand to cool our greediness, to heat our charity, to subdue these worldly hearts of ours full of wantonness and pride? Have our hearts gone along
with

with our prayers when we pray'd for our sanctification?

If thus we have given all diligence to sanctifie our selves, and crucifie and bury our old man with Christ; Though after that there remain too many roots of the old weeds within us, we shall find that in God's book of accounts a sincere endeavour is taken for a vertuous performance. Wherefore the Apostle saith not barely, *Add to your faith vertue*, but *give all diligence to add to your faith vertue*.

This is a precious word, *Give all diligence*; We were undone but for it. Were we to be judged by our Vertue, there were no hope for us: But our gracious Master that knows our weakness, looks for our diligence rather than our performance. Give all diligence, it will be accepted for vertue.

But truly this is no light task, to *give all diligence*. You have not discharged it when you have given your Ministers fair leave to speak, and graced them so much as to stay out the Sermon: God will have your hands as well as your ears, and all the days of the week as well as the first.

Observe the word *all*; St. Peter saith not, give *some* but give *all* diligence. He will have all our hearts, all our minds, all our strength. For since Christ gave his whole self

self for us, Godhead, Manhood, Body and Soul ; be ye sure he will not be satisfied with parcels of our poor selves, and of our weak diligence. *Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and seek him with their whole heart, Psal. 119.* Let us give our whole selves to God, and keep nothing behind. Let our Soul bless the Lord, and all that is within us bless his holy Name, *Psal. 103.* So much for Vertue.

III. Now the way to further our diligence in adding to our faith vertue, is to add to vertue *knowledge*. When the good Wife in the Parable would sweep the house, she lighted the Candle. Labouring for vertue and sanctification, is sweeping the house within us ; but the light of knowledge must be by : Else if we go about to sweep the house of our hearts, or the house of the Church, without the light of a right knowledge, we may commit the fault of the *Roman* vulgar version in that place, *evertit domum*, instead of *everrit* ; It will be overthrowing instead of sweeping : Instead of making the house clean, we shall pull it down.

The knowledge of God is mentioned in the two Verses before my Text ; A knowledge that brings grace and peace, and all things pertaining unto life and godliness. Such

Such a knowledge is part of faith, and is grounded upon authority. But in this Text the Apostle means (as I take it) that knowledge which is gotten by study and reason, yet upon the ground of faith. *Two* reasons I have to take it so. The *one*, that we are bidden to add to our faith knowledge, as a thing different from faith; The *other*, that the word *σπουδή*, which is here translated *diligence*, properly signifies *study*. This knowledge then is got by study and diligence. And the Apostle would have us all Students, Women and all, at least enough to be *always ready to give an answer to every one that asketh us a reason of the hope that is in us*. So much he requireth in his first Epistle, c. 3. 15.

What! to give a reason of our hope? *Cognoscere causas! Felix qui potuit*. It is a high degree of knowledge; and God demands no less. God will be served by every creature of his in its own kind. We are reasonable creatures, God will have from us a reasonable service, *λογικὴν λατρείαν*. God by his mercy sets up the light of faith in our soul: But unless we pour the oyl of knowledge into the lamp of faith, the lamp of faith will out; never deceive your selves: And then God knoweth what vertue you shall work in the dark. *My people is destroyed for want of knowledge.* Be-
cause

cause thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, saith the Lord, Hoseah 4. 6.

Certainly destruction comes upon Souls for want of knowledge. For as *the new man is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him, Col. 3. 10.* So the old man of sin is made up of ignorance, after the image of him that created him, even the Devil. Look over all the histories of the Church ; Whensoever there was an ignorant, it was also an ungodly age ; for the want of knowledge was ever attended with the want of faith and vertue.

As learned as we are, or think to be, it is the want of knowledge that undoeth us. For what is the reason that some are carried away by their intemperance and voluptuousness ; others are plotting mischief to rise by the fall of their Neighbours ? It is because they know neither Gods Commandments nor promises, or regard them not, which is the worst ignorance. Tell me not, here is a Learned man, it is pity he is not honest ; I tell you he is an Ignorant ; He knows not so much as his duty. Would the World remember that God is Holy, that he is All-seeing, that he is the searcher of hearts, that he loveth righteousness and abhorreth iniquity, and that he will certainly bring every work into judgment ; Sure there would be more equity, more charity,

charity, more sobriety, more devotion. David's question was a wise one, *Psal. 14. 4. Have the workers of iniquity no knowledge, that eat up my people as they eat bread, and call not upon the Lord?* As if he had said, Had they knowledge in any reasonable measure, they could not be so mischievous; They would not oppress their neighbours; They would be careful to call upon the Lord, who would lead them in the ways of truth and righteousness. Ignorance with them was the cause of all mischiefs, and so it is with us.

But even they that would be good, may come short of it, unless they add to vertue knowledge, and examine upon what ground they do good: Whether they do good to the poor, because they are the members of Christ, or to avoid their clamour. Whether they be sober to save their consciences, or to save charges. Whether they go to Church to obey God, or to obey custome. Whether they be just in their outward dealing to please God, or to get credit or advancement in the World. Whether they take upon them the Ministry for the Office, or for the Benefice. Had we all the inspired gifts of the Primitive Christians when this Epistle was written, yet should we need to add to our vertue knowledge: Else

vertue would not stand upon faith, nor faith upon God.

This lesson regards Divines especially, through whom, as so many chanel of mercy, the knowledge of God is conveyed unto his People. For (saith *Malachi 2.7.*) *the Priests lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth, for he is the messenger of the Lord of Hosts.*

That part of the Priests office under the Law, to teach the People, is now past to the Ministers of the Gospel. I say not, that they are heirs of the Levitical Priesthood; but in this they succeed them, that at their mouths the people should seek the Law, and they are the Ministers of the Lord of Hosts. So necessity lieth upon the Minister to be learned in the Evangelical Law; *not a Novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the Devil, 1 Tim. 3. 6.* Here *St. Paul* sheweth how ignorance and pride are going hand in hand, and both ushering the Devil: For commonly the least learned are the most peremptory; And then the Devil hath fair play, being guarded with ignorance and boldness, to set himself forth like an Angel of light.

Blessed and holy is that Minister of God's Word, who is first of all truly endowed with faith and vertue, and then soundly grounded in holy knowledge, and takes no less

less pain to feed his learning than to vent it, supplying his layings out with his comings in : Whose mouth out of the fulness of his heart speaketh good things ; like that rich housholder of the Parable, *fetching out of his treasury things new and old*, employing them not for ostentation but edification, which he promotes no less by his life than doctrine. Such men commonly, though they be not sparing of their pains, are not lavish of their words, and have more skill in stuffing than spinning out ; bringing forth much holy matter with little noise ; Like great Rivers, which gliding gently enrich the Land with commerce and plenty. For it seems that God would have the High Priests Robe to be deckt with Pomegranats and Bells mingled together, to teach his Ministers, that he loveth not a sound without fruit, and will not have the Church served with an empty noise.

We learn who are the Pastors after Gods heart, *Jer. 3. 15. I will give them Pastors according to my heart, which shall feed them with knowledge and understanding*, not amuse them with tales and flourishes, and with that invention which I have many times admired, how a Man can find variety enough to say nothing in a million of words : But all *that* is hollow meat ; It is *verba dare populo* : For though words without know-

ledge, set forth with much vehemency, may stir the passion of the people, they feed not their consciences. Then it fareth with the deluded souls according to *Isaiah's* comparison, *Isa. 29. 8. It is as when a hungry man dreameth that he eateth, but he awaketh, and his soul is empty.*

This is plain dealing, to speak the duty of Ministers before the People: And I do it, because all shall know that there is no hidden mystery of craftiness among us, and that we will not do the work of the Lord deceitfully. Also to shew that we know our duty in some measure. And although we will always suffer our selves to be admonisht by godly, learned and discreet Persons of the Laity, and thank them too; we may spare the pains of some of the lowest capacity and the highest presumption, who like no Text of Scripture so well as this, *Psal. 119. I am wiser than all my teachers,* and would put down all teachers and all teaching. But these that would put down all teaching would be teachers themselves, set up by their own authority, mistaking an itch of contention and intemperance of words, for an inward calling; yet understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm. For take them from their usual themes of Invective, and put them upon a plain principle, say it be Justification, say

say it be Regeneration ; and without doubt the very questions of their Catechism would put them shrewdly to it : Like those Disciples of *Ephesus*, who likely thought themselves jolly men, but when it came to the proof, they knew not whether there was any Holy Ghost.

In one thing I concur with them : They wish for the putting down of all Ministry in the Church ; I wish it also. But how ? I wish withal for that glorious time when there will be no more need of it, when the Kingdom of Christ shall be come in glory ; That blessed time when the prophecy of *Jeremy* shall be fulfilled, *c. 31. v. 34. They shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for they shall know me from the least of them to the greatest, saith the Lord.* O that the blessed time were come, promised *Isa. 11. 9. The Land shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the Waters cover the Sea!* Then indeed all Ministry must go down, for what need of Ministers, when Christ our great Master shall be all in all ? Till then let Ministers teach knowledge, and let the People learn it. In this myltical body some are the mouth, some are the ear ; Let not the ear juttle the mouth out of office. *Let none think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but think soberly, Rom. 12. 3.*

But this intrencheth upon the fourth Point,
Add to knowledge temperance; To which I
 pass.

IV. *Temperance* in the proper and ordinary sense signifieth sobriety. But here I take it as meant in a metaphorical and borrowed sense, for modesty in our knowledge. For since the Apostle joyneth these two, *Add to knowledge temperance*, it is most like that he means it in the sense most convenient to knowledge. Now because these four good habits hold together, Temperance which is the fourth, hath a relation to each of the three former. For that we be not overweening with the conceit of our faith, nor proud in the ostentation of our vertue, nor over-born with the sail of our knowledge, St. *Peter* will have us to add to them all *temperance*. Without it faith will degenerate into carnal security, the study of good works into affected singularity, knowledge into curiosity and peremptoriness: But Temperance is the seasoning of all vertues, and there is none but will admit this caution, *Nè quid nimis*, nothing too much. Not that one can be too vertuous, but one may over-do vertuous acts; though not in the substance, yet in the circumstance; and then the circumstance drowns the substance.

Besides,

Besides, as full bodies and the pride of blood are much subject to inflammations, which will turn and corrupt the whole mass of the blood ; So Vertues when they are once *ἐν ἀκμῇ*, in their height and prime, are much subject to be inflamed with presumption ; a wicked leaven which leaveneth the whole lump of vertues, of which the falls of *Satan* and *Adam* are lamentable examples. But Temperance is that *granum salis*, that precious salt, which preserveth all vertues from rankling ; And of all vertues the intellectual, comprehended in this word *knowledge*, stand in most need of it.

Temperance in knowledge ought to be considered *two* ways, in the *subject* and in the *object*.

As for the *subject*, weak understandings ought not to be overcharged with knowledge ; And this care belongs to Parents and Masters. For commonly the weakest wits have the strongest conceit of their capacity ; And in that strong conceit lyeth their weakness. Weak brains ought to be temperate in knowledge, just as they ought to be temperate in Wine, for excess in either of these may take their wits off the hooks. It is not only *Poetry*, that is *Vinum demonum* ; The Devil will use *any* knowledge, and the *best* sooner then any, to intoxicate the brain, and make it drunk even

with goodness: But of all excesses in knowledge, a surfeit of *Divinity* is pernicious to weak Souls, whether they be *bold* or *timorous*.

For if with their weakness they are *bold* and *passionate*, then their little learning will fill them with a high conceit of themselves, and a head-strong wilfulness to set up and defend heresies. And whether they defend good or bad doctrine, they do it not so much with reasons, as with a furious zeal, which being assisted with number and strength will break into strange effects, even to the destruction of whole Nations; as it was done by the *Donatists* in *Africa*, and might be done by *Papists* or *Quakers* in *England*, if God and our Superiours would let them.

But if a surfeit of Theology gets into a weak *timorous* soul, it works another effect, which is trouble of Conscience. For as Meats of hard digestion in a weak stomach breed crudities, and bring qualms and colick; Likewise hard matters of Divinity breed obstructions and pangs of discomfort, in weak consciences. Let such good souls keep themselves to their Prayer-book and Meditations of God's love, and leave high questions to the Schools.

These are the cautions of Temperance in holy knowledge, in regard of the *subject*:

But

But now where the subject is strong enough, and the wit may bear knowledge, there is need of another caution of temperance in the *Object*; and that not for the quantity of knowledge, but the choice; For if a sound wit can hit once the right object of holy knowledge, there is no great danger of too much. Though God had given us a Lease of three such lives as that of *Methuselah*, we could not in all that time compass that skill in which *St. Paul* did happily lose himself, when he said, *Eph. 3.18. Let Christ dwell in your hearts by faith, that being rooted and grounded in love, ye may be able to comprehend with all Saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge.* And see what scope he gives to your knowledge in the following words, *That you may be filled with all the fulness of God.* This is further than you can go in this life, go ye never so fast. There you need not the bridle of Temperance. All then lyeth in the choice of your knowledge, in setting a right byas upon your knowledge. Let it take once the right chanel, and then let it go as far as it will, it will never do any hurt. Study the breadth, the length, the depth, the height of the love of God to us, and never fear to go too far.

Wherein then lyeth the dangerous intemperance

perance of going too far in holy knowledge? My Brethren, it lyeth in presuming to know what God hath hidden from us: When Men go about to unlock the Closet of God's counsel with the Key of humane reason, and storm when they find their Key too short to reach to the bottom of that great Lock.

I would gladly know of those curious People that would unlock God's Council-Chamber, and cannot abide to be saved unless they know why God damneth not their Neighbours; Do they fully understand the Articles of their Creed? Do they know, do they feel that love of Christ which passeth knowledge? Do they know, do they feel what obligations the death and resurrection of Christ layeth upon them? Have they learned their distance with God, and how far they may and may not presume with him in prayer? what temper of knowledge, reverence, love, fear, humility, and confidence they must have in their breast, that they may worship God in Spirit and in truth?

Before we have learned well these necessary things, is it time for us to enquire of the concurrence of God's grace with man's will, and of the high inscrutable points of God's eternal decree? Shall we pry into his hidden counsel before we well know his revealed will?

It

It is indeed our duty to learn, and our comfort to believe this doctrine, *Eph. 1. 5.* that God hath predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will; To the praise of the glory of his grace wherein he hath made us accepted in his beloved. Yet to keep your search in these high points within the limits of temperance, I recommend unto you these three short Cautions.

1. Remember, that God's Essence and Wisdom being infinite cannot be comprehended by a finite mind.

2. Remember, that if the actions of God agree not with the rules of your reason, These rules of reason were made for man, not for God.

3. Remember, that the knowledge prescribed by *St. Paul*, to be filled with all the fulness of God, is not the knowledge of Gods counsel, but that of his will and love.

But what! *Cælum ipsum petimus stultitiâ.* We mount towards Heaven, not by faith and love, but by boldness and curiosity. But if ever any get to Paradise that way, we may safely give him leave to shut the door after him.

But I am afraid that many have more need of *diligence* than *temperance* in knowledge. And the intemperance that spoils their knowledge is not the improper and
meta-

metaphorical, which is curiosity ; but the literal and downright intemperance in meat and drink. For whereas St. *Paul* exhorted *Timothy* to use a *little* Wine, they (to make a work of supererogation) use a *great deal* of Wine. Which is a direct and material opposition to the knowledge of God, for it throweth liquor upon that holy lamp of divine knowledge. It is true, that some will brew controversie with strong drink, and are shrewd Disputants when they are among their Pots. But those disputes shew that their light of God's knowledge is oppressed, like a Candle that spitteth and sparkleth when the wick is moist.

They say that Wine sharpens the wit ; But I am sure that sobriety preserveth the truth. St. *Paul* sets them both together, *Act. 26, 25. I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak forth the words of truth and soberness.* And it is a necessary lesson at all times for the preserving of holy knowledge, to *add to knowledge temperance*, both in the one sense and in the other.

It is one of *Heraclitus* his *Enigma's* *ἕρπον ἀεττον*, *Dry light is the best* ; That is, The more the light of your understanding is free from the fogg of the vapours of your stomach, the fitter it is for knowledge. As a pure air transmitteth the light better than a mist.

How

How clear then, how pure ought that mind to be, which is to entertain such a pure light as the knowledge of God and our salvation? Even when we keep within bounds in our opinion, I fear that being so faithful in lifting up a health will violate our faithfulness to God: And that sending the Cup round so often without need, will smother knowledge, and in time wear away both temperance, and knowledg, and virtue, and Faith and all. For as the growth of the new man proceeds from faith to vertue, and from vertue to knowledge, and from knowledge to temperance; Likewise the decrease of the new man will fall from intemperance to ignorance, from ignorance to vice, and from vice to unbelief; and then the Tree is pluckt up by the roots.

The Lord enable us by his good Spirit to break down the old strong holds of unbelief in our sinful nature: Giving us a Faith that may be to us a mother of Vertue, a Vertue that may feed faith her mother, a knowledge that may instruct our vertue, and a temperance that may season our knowledge. Yea Lord grant us so to be made new creatures by that grace of thine *which bringeth wisdom and salvation, as to deny ungodliness*
and

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and worldly lusts, and live soberly, righteously,
and godly in this present world, through Jesus
Christ our Lord:

To whom with thee and the Holy Ghost
be Glory now and for ever more. *Amen.*

The End of the Third Sermon.

Parable

Parable of the growing Seed.

SERMON IV.

Mark iv.

- 26 *So is the Kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground, and should sleep, and rise night and day :*
- 27 *And the seed should spring and grow up he knoweth not how.*
- 28 *For the earth brings forth fruit of her self, first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.*
- 29 *But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest is come.*

THE first imployment of Man after his creation Gen. 2. 17. was to dress a Garden, and to keep it : And his first trade after his fall was

was to *till the ground from whence he had been taken*. No tilling at the first, dressing and keeping only a grown Garden: But after his sin he was put to labour and *till* the stubborn ground in the sweat of his brows.

Man himself is a piece of earth. Before his fall he was an *Eden*, a Garden of God; And God was the Gardener of Man, as Man was of the Garden. Man as then needed no tilling, a gentle dressing and keeping only of his fruit and pleasantness served the turn: But now by his sin his *Eden* is turned into a Wilderness; He is all over-grown with thorns, and needs much plowing and harrowing before he can bear any fruit.

Our Saviour *Jesus* came into the World for that end, to break up our fallow grounds, sow in us a good seed, and make us the field which the Lord hath blessed. To that purpose he brings forth the long Parable of the Sower, which fills the half of this Chapter. To the same purpose he brings this in again, wherein he sheweth by what ways and degrees that Seed is brought to perfection.

This Parable, as all comparisons, hath two parts, the *subject*, and *that which it is compared unto*: The *subject* is the *Kingdom of God*; The *thing that it is compared unto* is a *tillage*.

Concerning

Concerning *the Kingdom of God*, I will say little more than will serve to understand in what sense it is taken here. *The kingdom of God* is taken many ways in Scripture: It is taken *first* and chiefly for *God's dominion over all his creatures*: And good reason he should rule over the works of his hand. It is *David's* reasoning, *The Sea is his and he made it, and his hands prepared the dry land: O come let us worship and fall down, and kneel before the Lord our Maker.* Of that Kingdom it is said, *Psal. 29. 10.* that *the Lord sitteth King for ever.*

That general kingdom is not that of this Text: But in the midst of that great kingdom of Nature we must look for another, which is the marrow and the sap that maintaineth the great body of the general Kingdom of God; And that is the *kingdom of grace*, for whose sake the great Realm of Nature subsisteth. The Subjects and Citizens of that kingdom of Grace may say with *David*, *The Earth and the Inhabitants thereof are dissolved, we bear up the Pillars of it.* Not that they have any such inherent power, but because God in their behalf maintaineth the World. But for them, this great building of Nature, which is groaning under an insupportable weight of iniquity, would break into a Chaos, and sink down into the gulph of its old nothing.

Among the great number of God's Subjects, those that know God, have that right to call him *Father*. In those old times of *Abraham*, the *Canaanites* gave to their Kings the style of *Abimelec*, that is, *My Father the King*; Which sheweth, that in the first Antiquity, when Men lived hundreds of years, and saw whole Nations in their Posterity, the Sovereignty was in Fathers. It is so in God's Church still. God our Sovereign is our Father. And if we keep in the duty of Subjects, we shall enjoy the right of Sons in God's Family, and all the Sons are Heirs and Kings.

The Kingdom of God, the subject of this Parable, is *the kingdom of Grace* in every faithful heart, as the exposition of the Parable will evidently shew. The drift of the Parable being to describe how by little and little and by small degrees, the Kingdom of God, that is, the gracious dominion of his Word and Spirit, advanceth it self in our hearts, as Corn in the ground, till it be perfected to an harvest of Glory.

This is then the beginning of the Kingdom of God within us; *It is as if a man should cast seed into the ground*. Here you have four things, the ground, the seed, the sower, the sowing. The rest of the Text being *historical*, requires only an historical order of exposition. But as for these four
main

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main Principles of the Parable, the ground is a Man's heart, the seed the Word of God, the sower a Man, and yet God by man; the sowing is the preaching of the Gospel.

I. First then, the ground is a mans heart. It is our Saviour's exposition, *Luke 8. 10.* in a Parable of the like sense as this. A man's heart is a clod of earth, and the soul that lodgeth in it, borroweth from the earth these qualities; That it cannot be idle, it will bring forth either good or evil; It is a strong fat ground, prone to bear thistles, but good seed will not grow in it but with much tillage; The best fruits that grow in it are wild and not of the right kind, but with the culture of the Gospel that wildness and rankness is corrected: And as in our grounds the blessing of God and the labour of man must joyn that the land may bear; Likewise that our hearts may bear fruits of righteousness, Christ the Son of righteousness must shine warm upon us, and the rain and dew of his gracious Spirit must descend into us. To that heavenly assistance God invites us to joyn our diligence, *Hosea 10. 11.* Sow to your selves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow grounds, for it is time to seek the Lord, till he come and rain righteousness upon you. My Brethren, let us break our fallow hearts

with contrition, and water them with tears of repentance. Let us send up to Heaven the vapours of Prayers and Praises, they will come down again in showers of Heavenly grace; And the blessing of God who hath begun that good work in us, will perfect it in us, yea by us, who without him can do nothing, and with him can do all things.

II. The *seed* provided by God for that ground is *the Word of God*. So Christ himself expounds it in the foregoing Parable of the Sower. For the word of God hath this resemblance with the Seed, that it hath life in it self. The seed looks like a little dead thing; And the Word of God is miscalled by the Papists a *dead letter*: But yet it is full of quickening spirit, and like the seed it hath a growing faculty and spreads over all the faculties of the Soul. Then as seed is in some sort everlasting, being perpetuated by propagation; So we learn, 1 *Pet.* 1. 23. that *we are born again not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God which liveth and abideth for ever.*

The Seed to which the Word of God is compared is *Corn*, the best of Seeds, and the most necessary for life. Where Corn is wanting, notwithstanding all the plenty of Cattel, Fish and Fowl, the Country is famished:

famished: And where the Word of God is wanting, neither humane learning nor moral wisdom will feed the Soul. There is no spiritual life without the bread of life.

III. The *sower* of that Seed is a *man*, saith the Text. By that man some will understand the Lord Jesus, expounding that which followeth, that the man *sleepeth and riseth*, of his death and resurrection: But if you read further, it cannot be said of Christ, that *the Seed groweth he knoweth not how*. Wherefore I stand to the letter, a *Man*, any allowed Minister of God's Word; for God hath not chosen Angels but Men for the Ministry of his Word, and hath honoured the Ministry of men, being made himself a man and a Minister. But he was God and man; we meer men, and weak men, God knoweth: Wherefore if a Minister commit some fault of infirmity in sowing this holy seed, forgive him, he is a man, and by consequent faulty. *Humani ab illo nihil alienum puta.* If he will sow strange seed of his own, receive it not; he is but a *man*, and hath no authority unless he can say after St. Paul, *I have received of the Lord that which also I have given unto you*. Doth the seed which he soweth prosper? praise him not for it, he is but a *man*; Such a great effect as the conversion of the Soul,

and the earnest of salvation, could not have come from him, had not God done it by him. Also doth the seed, though faithfully sown, miscarry and rot under the clods? blame not the Sower, he is but *a man*; *Paul may plant, Apollos may water, but it is God that giveth the increase.*

IV. How little is man's part in this great work, we learn by the fourth particular, the manner of *sowing*; *It is as if a man should cast seed into the ground.* Ponder the word *casting*: It is certain that a faithful sower must use a great deal of circumspection and diligence in providing good and convenient seed, in observing the nature of the ground, in discerning the season, and in sowing with such a measure that the ground be neither undersown nor oversown. Yet when he comes to the act of sowing, *jacit*, he *casteth* the seed, as it were at random; Let God in his mercy do the rest. Why? though we have a general notion of the Peoples capacity, and some guess at their disposition, yet we know not their hearts: *The heart is deceitful and desperately wicked, who can know it?* Jer. 17. 9. And though we knew the hearts, we could not change them; and much less would we change the seed to follow the genius of the ground. Well then, since it is not in our power to hit right,
especial-

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especially when we teach many at once, *faciemus*, we will *cast the seed*. Some will fall among thorns, some by the way-side, some upon stones; We cannot help it: *facimus sementem non ponimus*; We do not *set* the seed, we do but *cast* it. Fall where it can, take it who can; The Lord in mercy be pleased to set it whilst we cast it. Unhappy *we* if the seed be lost in our hands ere it be cast; Unhappy *you* if it be lost in your ground when it is once cast. On Gods name be watchful and diligent to take it when it falls. For as for the Preachers part in a publick action, it is no more but so, *It is as if a man should cast seed into the ground.*

The remnant of the Text is an *historical* relation of what becomes of that seed after it is sown. What follows then? The man after casting the seed, *sleeps and riseth night and day*. Without far fetched allegories, the sense is this, That the Sower after sowing will follow his natural and civil course; He sleepeth and riseth at his hours; He doth not always think of that he hath done, but lets God do. Yet this will occasion an instruction of watchfulness to all that have cure of souls, not to sleep too long, but to wake and rise, lest while men sleep the enemy come and sow darnel among the Corn. Therefore the Ministers of God's

Word, both Superiours and Inferiours, are called by the Apostles ἐπισκοποι, that is, *Inspectors* and *Overseers*. The eye of the Husbandman makes the seed prosper.

But whilest the man sleepeth and riseth, *the seed springs up*. Our Saviour useth that term, to teach us, that the first working of the Word of God in our hearts is very like the first sprouting of Corn; for as seed draweth the best substance of the earth, and turns it into his own; Even so the Word of God, by his powerful working draws our best affections, and changeth, yea in a manner transubstantiateth our hearts, creating in our inside a new man, another creature.

But the seed at the first is like to dye in the ground, as St. Paul saith, 1 Cor. 15. 36. *That which thou sowest is not quickened except it dye*. Likewise this divine seed finds ill entertainment in our hearts at the first, for the flesh which is enmity against God, goeth about to smother it. As some unnatural Mothers, having conceived against their will, strive to make their fruit away ere it come to perfection: This wicked flesh having conceived that good seed much against her carnal mind, bends all her endeavours to make it away. You know that after the springing of wheat, Winter will come upon it presently; Frost, cold Rains, and sharp Winds

Winds will nip it: So it fares with the beginnings of regeneration, in young People especially; Then violent passions will be blustering, and the Devil mustereth up all the interesses of the World and the Flesh to give a sharp on-set to the Spirit of God, which formeth and promoteth this holy springing.

But be of good courage; Notwithstanding these oppositions, growing will come after springing. So it doth in the Parable. *And the seed groweth.* Although, to speak properly, the Word of God groweth not, but we grow by it: Yet in respect of us it grows, for by degrees we have it more and more, as the light groweth from the dawning to the full day.

How this seed groweth, if I would describe it, I should make my self wiser than Jesus Christ, who saith here, that the seed groweth so that the Sower *knows not how.*

And yet many of those Sowers now adays take upon them to write histories of the growing of that seed, setting rules or stages in a manner to the working of God's Spirit. They are good souls, who having observed the motions of the Spirit of God within themselves, set down afterward their private Experiences as general Maxims. But indeed the Spirit of God is working diversly according to the several natures; and sometimes

times these observations bring trouble to good consciences, when they feel not that the Spirit is acting in them in the same method as they find it set down in their book of devotion. It is much for us poor Sowers of God's Word, to know how to sow and water it; How it worketh in the ground, God knoweth, we do not. Yea sometimes the seed groweth not only without the Sowers knowledge, but without or against his intention: *One preacheth Christ by contention, not sincerely, but the other in love, Phil. I. 16. But notwithstanding* (saith the Apostle) *whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is preached.*

But take it at the best; If good seed well sown by a good and willing Sower grow well, praise him not for it; *the seed groweth he knoweth not how.* You may commend his good purpose, not praise his good effect. Also doth the seed grow ill? Blame him not, *the seed groweth he knoweth not how:* You must commend his good purpose, excuse his ill success, and lay the blame where the fault is, in the untowardness of the ground.

The Lord grant that this holy seed may grow and prosper in you, though we Sowers know not how; so that we may do more than we know, more than we think, above that we can. But as in the finger of a Watch, if we cannot see it going, we be-
se ech

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feech you that in time we may see how it is gone forward, by your increase in all goodness.

And now look back I pray upon these *four* several intimations of the quality of the Sower and his work ; That he is but *a man* ; That he doth but *cast* the seed ; That he *sleeps* afterwards ; That he *knoweth not* how the seed groweth : All these so many cautions one upon the neck of another, that we mistake not the labour of man for the work of God ; That we give not to weak man the glory due to God ; And that we make not that the task of the Preacher, which is the duty of the Hearers. What would ye have of *us* ? We cannot make your hearts fruitful to good works ; we are but *men*, we do but *cast* the seed ; after we have cast it, we *sleep* as our neighbours do ; and though we were watching continually, we *know not* how the seed grows, and cannot make it grow : That must be the work of God, and your work. Wherefore after we have done our part, yea though we do it not, yet be ye sure to do yours, and look with a holy obedience of faith what duty is laid upon you in the next words of the Text.

Here it is, *The Earth brings forth fruit of her self.* This God will have us to do ; Else no kingdom of God for us : No kingdom
of

of God within us. You may ask, How can I bring forth fruit of my self? Doth not the Apostle say, 2 Cor. 3. 5. *that of our selves we are not sufficient to think any thing that is good, but our sufficiency is of God?* The Original Greek decides that difficulty; for though the same Pronoun, *of your selves and of her self*, be in both places of our English version, the Greek hath different words; In this Text *αὐτομάτη*, *of her good will*; In that of St. Paul, *ἀφ' ἐαυτῶν ὡς ἐξ ἐαυτῶν*, that is, *of our own motion and power*; for these two ways this term of *our selves* may be taken. *Of our selves* as of *our own power*, it is certain we can do nothing; but *of our selves*, of *a free good will* we may and must; as an Infant held up under the Arms goeth *of himself*, not *by himself*. To say that our hearts must bear fruit of themselves, diminisheth nothing of the glory due to God's assistance, which worketh for us both to will and to do according to his good pleasure. The example of the Text clears that, *The Earth bears fruit of her self*; There is no doubt of that, All her natural strength goeth to it: And yet it is the Sun and the Rain that gives her strength to bear. Likewise good souls bear fruit of themselves, works of piety and charity: These actions come *à volentibus*, from willing minds and free endeavours, not from their sufficiency; that sufficiency

ficiency is from God. And this consideration, that all our sufficiency is from God, ought not to slacken our diligence but quicken it, and make us say, *I can do all things in Christ that strengtheneth me*, and so fall to work, *spontanei, of our selves*, and with a free heart. It is a wise doctrine and profitable to them that can embrace it with humility and without curiosity, that we must give to God the whole glory of our obedience, and to our selves the whole task. And for the love of God, without entangling your minds with perplexing questions, call upon God's assistance, and let *the Earth*, that is, *your soul*, bear fruit of her self.

The degrees of production are *three* in the Text, *herba, spica, granum*, First the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. Philosophers say, *Natura non facit saltum*, Nature makes no leap ; It goeth by steps : So doth Grace. Both Nature and Grace advance to perfection by degrees. The full Corn in the ear doth not spring presently out of the Earth ; No, by small beginnings the Kingdom of God is formed in us : It must be *first* in the *blade*, but even then it is the Kingdom of God. If there be any beginning of regeneration in us, though it be but a small blade peeping out, Christ doth grace it here with the name of the
King-

Kingdom of God, and he will bring it from strength to strength, till he bring it to perfection.

This similitude expresseth very well, that the beginnings of regeneration are slow and hard. Wheat sown in *October* is in the blade till *April*, and much ill weather goes over it. And what a hard and long work is it to form that kingdom of God in the heart of a carnal man that comprehends not the things of God! St. *Paul* expresseth this difficulty, speaking thus to the *Galatians*, 4. 19. *My little Children, of whom I travel in birth again until Christ be formed in you.* The ground is a natural Mother to weeds, she will make them grow presently: But she is a step-mother to Corn, therefore it is long a coming. Vices in us are in their own soyl; No wonder that they grow so fast: But Piety there is in a strange ground; That makes it so slow to take and stay so long in the blade.

Sometimes indeed you shall see in the beginning of regeneration a fair hopeful green; Some Children will have godliness and peace of conscience more than aged persons: But the poor things are not yet acquainted with the rebellions of Nature. There will come anon a blustering and tempestuous season of youth that will nip the young blade of grace, and stay its growth. But despair
not,

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not, the Spring of Grace will come again: He that hath begun a good work in them, will fulfil it unto the day of Jesus Christ, *Phil. 1. 6.* O let Parents be careful to sow goodness in their Children before they be capable of evil. For if the blade be sprung up before the stormy season of temptations, it may abide much ill weather, and by the assistance of Heaven it will in time shoot up from the blade to *the ear.*

This is the *second* degree of the increase of the Kingdom of Grace, *Spica, the ear.* By this I understand the open profession of Religion and outward practice of the duties of devotion. So far a great many that profess the Christian name will proceed; and many being come so far, are blasted and go back: Many times also they will keep to the very harvest a high staulk, broad blades, an upright ear, and nothing in it. Husbandmen love not to see their Corn over-rank, and beset with broad blades; and I shall never wish to see the sap of godliness run into blades of outward shew and precise formality; for then commonly it leaveth no substance within; All *that* is but straw and chaff, good only for the fire. I will not stand upon straw and ears, I hasten to *the corn*, that *third* and best degree in my Text, *the full corn in the ear.*

The

The full Corn in the ear is that which Saint Paul calls *Christ formed in us*, Gal. 4. That Kingdom of God which is *righteousness, peace and joy through the Holy Ghost*, Rom. 14. It is the reigning of the love of God in our hearts, when his glory is our aim, his will our rule, his promises our comfort, his fatherly care our confidence: When we seek to please him, not our selves; when we have a fervent charity to our Neighbours, when we have weaned our hearts from the love of the World and the Flesh; when we speak the truth as it is in our heart; when we are upright and sincere in our conversation, that is, *the full corn in the ear*.

But alas! Where is that fulness to be found? How empty are we of Piety, how full of vanity and corrupt affections? O my Brethren, if you have that full Corn in the ear, at least in some measure, Make it good to the World and to your own Consciences, by the proof which the Text requireth. What is it? *The fruit was brought forth*. Who will believe that you have fruit within, if you shew none without? *By their fruits shall ye know them*, saith Jesus Christ, Matth. 7. 16. by such fruits as are brought forth and seen at the outside; for else vvho can know the fruit in the inside, but he that
know-

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knowveth the hearts? If there be vvithin, the sap of faith and true piety, be sure it vvill bring forth the fruits of charity and holy conversation. They that wrong their Neighbours with fraud and violence, and themselves with intemperance and incontinence, shall have much ado to perswade us of their piety and zeal to God's glory. If you bring forth neither assiduity nor reverence to God's service; If the exercise of Prayers and Praises be not ordinary in your Families; If piety and charity be not evident in your words and actions, you shew evidently that there is none in your affections. Certainly unless the fruit be brought forth, there is no full Corn in the ear. For it is a certain Maxim, *Ex nihilo nihil fit*; Nothing within and nothing without are very true to one another.

But now to the *Harvest*, and so to an end. *When the fruit is brought forth, immediately (or suddenly) he puts in the sickle, because the Harvest is come.*

This *Harvest* is the happy departure of good Souls, when God with the sickle of death cuts them down to lay them up in his Barns. Harvest is only where there is a crop: Wherefore in the death of the wicked there is no Harvest for God. Stubble and Weeds yield no Harvest. Them God

by his Angels will cut down, bind them in bundles, and burn them in the fire, *Matth. 13.* Death unto them is a most fearful sickle: But good Souls must not fear the sickle of Death, though it be sharp. It doth but cut our bonds away; and we are no sooner cut down by Death, but we are gathered up by the good hand of our Saviour, and bound up in the bundle of life.

This merciful blow God giveth *when the fruit is brought forth*, saith the Text. One would think it should be when the fruit is ripe. But then the Harvest would never come: For this fruit, the kingdom of grace in this life, is never fully ripe in our Souls, for it grows in the shade; It enjoyeth not fully the Sunshine of grace. What then? Doth God reap unripe Corn? Yes, this fruit is like Medlars, that are cropt, being yet unripe, and grow ripe on the floor.

This is for your comfort, you penitent pious Souls: You need not fear death, tho' your faith be yet unripe; If you *bring forth some fruit* of the right kind, Christ tells you here that the Harvest is come, and when you are reaped down by God's sickle, you shall find in God's heavenly Granaries that ripeness which in this earth you could not attain unto.

Besides, in these words, he *puts in the sickle because the Harvest is come*, a tacit promise

mise is implied to all good Christians, that the sickle of death will not come upon them till there be something to reap in their Consciences. Judge not sinisterly of beginners in their regeneration, that dye suddenly, or under age; God is true in his promise; He will not put in the sickle before the Harvest is come, and that Harvest he will prepare in them by ways to us unknown, and to him most easie.

But let not this promise breed idleness in any Soul: For God obligeth not himself to stay for your leisure. Examine the words. All over the Parable he speaks of those only where there is some fruit growing, some working of the ground, some labour *to bring forth* a Harvest. Them God will not cut down with his sickle till their Harvest be ready, and he will make it ready when it is not. But carnal and profane hearts he will strike with his mortal sickle, because the Harvest is not ready, and because the Axe is laid down unto the root of the Trees, and every Tree that bringeth no good fruit is hewen down and cast into the fire. God's sickle will be ready for them, when they are not ready for God.

One word more: This sickle is put in *evδέως, immediately*, suddenly. Indeed, taking death for the departure of the Soul out of the Body, every Man's death is sudden.

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Never any Man was long a dying. Let us not fear death, it is not a difficult passage. In one blow we are dispatcht. With one sigh we yield up our Souls to Heaven. With one cut of God's sickle *ἐυθέως* immediately, away fall all the bonds of our immortality.

Seeing then that the sickle of death cuts suddenly in all the seasons of life, and that there is no set time for that Harvest, let us labour to bring forth fruit betimes: And since we are continually subject to the sickle, let us be always ready for the Harvest. For it is a great shame, and a greater danger, for one to be far gone in his life, and have the kingdom of God but in the blade, or none at all.

Lord, give us grace to bring forth fruit betimes, being continually in hope of thy Harvest, and in awe of thy sickle. Let the Sun of righteousness, and the dew of Heaven, further in us the increase of thy kingdom; and prepare within us a holy harvest, for thy glory, and our salvation. *Amen.*

The End of the Fourth Sermon.

If any of you lack Wisdom, let
him ask it of God.

S E R M O N V.

Jam. I. 5.

*If any of you lack Wisdom, let him ask of
God.*

THIS Epistle was written to the Christians of the Twelve Tribes that were scattered abroad. In that dispersion they were oppressed both by the Gentiles, Infidels, and by their own Country-men zealous of the Law, and were squeezed between these two sorts of Enemies, as Corn between two Mill-stones. Persons living among such tryals had great need to be stored with Christian wisdom, to avoid so many crosses, or to make them

light but gently, and to bear those with Patience which could not be avoided or mitigated with Prudence. And as their Trials framed them to Patience, the Trials of their patience framed them to Wisdom. This is evidently the drift of the first part of this Epistle as far as my Text; *James a Servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve Tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting. My Brethren, count it all joy when you fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience; But let patience have her perfect work, that you may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.*

But because the wisest Men are too weak to get that perfect work by their patience and experience, and to become perfect and entire, wanting nothing; the Apostle will have us to beg that wisdom at the hands of the Author and finisher of our faith, and doth encourage us to it by a promise of gracious acceptance. *If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him.* The first part of the Text is *our* part, that we must ask Wisdom of God; the rest which concerns the grant of the request, is the part of God. We will leave to God *his* part, and go about *ours*. It will be work enough for us now, and a great work, to learn to ask wisdom at God's hands.

That

That work consisteth in *three* things: 1. To know the thing that we must ask, *Wisdom*; 2. To know our want of it, *If any of you lack wisdom*; 3. And that we are commanded to ask it, *Let him ask of God.*

Wisdom in his original is God himself. He is wisdom in substance. His eternal Son, the second Person of the Trinity, is that primitive Wisdom which God possessed from everlasting, mentioned *Prov.8.* All the saving wisdom that is in the Church, and all the true knowledge and good counsel that is in the World, is an efflux and product of that original wisdom. From that spring therefore, from God the prime wisdom, we must fetch wisdom, if we will have any.

But that substantial Wisdom being above the reach of our understanding, let us look down upon such a wisdom as Men are capable of. Wisdom consisteth in *two* things, in fixing-upon a *good end*, and choosing *good* and convenient *means* for it.

About these, *three* ordinary faults are committed. The *first*, that Men propound to themselves a *bad end*, as the filling of their lust and intemperance, and after that choice, no wonder that they use means answerable to their end; Or 2. they make that their end which should be but the Means, as some Men seek to be learned or wealthy, but seek

not to glorifie God by their learning and wealth; Or 3. if they propound to themselves the true end which is the glory of God, it is with such misapprehensions of the nature of it, that they take destructive means to that end, which they would promote; Such are superstitious Persons that have the zeal of God, but not according to knowledge, and in their zeal will even kill God's best Servants and Children, thinking to do him service. Wherefore the rudiment of wisdom is to have a right apprehension and knowledge both of the end and means. *Prudentia est cognitio rerum appetendarum & fugiendarum*, saith Bernard, after Austin: Wisdom is the right discerning of things to be desired, and things to be avoided.

The mind being prepared and seasoned with that knowledge, the beginning and main point of wisdom is to take for our ultimate end that which is the true good, the soveraign good: If you apply your selves to that end with the right apprehension of the mind, and affection of the heart, you shall have no great labour to find out the good and comfortable means to attain it. Wherefore Solomon saith well, that *the beginning of Wisdom is the fear of the Lord.* Prov. 9. 10. because, if you begin there, to make God your chief and only end, and resolve to set the Lord always before you, to walk

walk before him unto all pleasing, you have laid such a ground of wisdom for your self, that you shall never want good counsel nor good success, as long as you stick to that ground.

Solomon had said in the beginning of the Chapter, that *Wisdom hath built her house*. After that he makes several invitations for Men to come to *Wisdoms School*. But the first ground that he gives, the first stone that he layeth for the building of *Wisdoms house*, is this, *the beginning of Wisdom is the fear of the Lord*. Many wise counsels have been and may be given to make one wise and happy : But this is the first and the great counsel, to fear the Lord. Miss that ground, whatsoever you build upon other ground, will prove ruinous in the end. All wisdom that is not subordinate to that great and principal wisdom of fearing the Lord, may be prudence in retail, but it is folly in the great. For he that having no fear of God, hath a great industry to get wealth and honour in the World, upon contrary grounds to that main ground, as fraud and violence, is twisting a silken halter for his own neck. All wisdom to get a fortune by an opposite course to that great wisdom, the fear of the Lord, is folly, making work for perdition.

Although

Although the *Children of this World* be wiser in their generation than the children of light, as the Lord Jesus witnesseth for them, *Luk. 16. 8.* yet the children of light may get wisdom for the businesses of the World out of God's book. So much *Solomon* doth express, *Pro. 24. 3, &c.* *Through wisdom is a house builded, and by understanding it is established. And by knowledge shall the Chambers be filled with all precious and pleasant riches. What more? A wise man is strong, (saith he) a man of knowledge increaseth strength. For by wise counsel thou shalt make thy War, and in multitude of Counsellors there is safety.* The Book of God containeth more wisdom than any book, even for the World. The reason that the Children of this World are wiser in their way than we are, is, that they study their books better than we do ours. Certainly godly wisdom makes a man happy in this World and in the next. Which double happiness is expressed by *Solomon*, *Prov. 3. 6.* *Length of days are in her right hand, and in her left hand riches and honour.* But the wise Christian will labour more to lay hold of the right hand than of the left, and prefer that length of days, that is, eternal life, before the riches and honour which last no longer than this short life.

Observe that *St. James* saith not, *If any lack money*, let him ask it of God, but *if any lack*

lack wisdom. Not that God supplyeth not our temporal wants, or that we must not ask of God to supply them; for he bids us to call upon him in the day of trouble, and to ask of him our daily bread: but because we are but too sensible of our temporal wants, and too little of the spiritual. Little would serve *Jacob*, that great Heir of the blessing. *If the Lord (said he) give me bread to eat, and rayment to put on, then shall the Lord be my God:* So much we may have at God's hands with little asking, yea without asking; for if ye seek first the kingdom of God and the righteousness thereof, all these things shall be added unto you, saith Christ, *Matth. 6. 33.* That kingdom and righteousness of God is the rule of heavenly wisdom in our hearts and minds. Happy and free is he, that hath brought himself under that Royal subjection. Blessed and rich is that purchaser, who hath got that inestimable treasure of heavenly wisdom. Wherefore that purchase is so much prest upon us by *Solomon*, *Prov. 4. 5. Get wisdom, get understanding---Forget her not, and she shall preserve thee; love her, and she shall keep thee.*

Much might be said of that large argument, *Wisdom*; but we may say more yet of the *lack* of it, because we are better acquainted with it. And this is our *second* confi-

consideration. One may wonder that St. James makes an *If* of it, *If any man lack wisdom*; as if there were any that doth not lack it. But in that short expression *three* doctrines lye hid; 1. That there is great lack of wisdom in the World; 2. That many in the World that lack it, do not think so; And 3. That none is capable to receive of God wisdom, nor so much as to ask it, unless he feel his want of it.

1. That there is great want of wisdom in the World; it is not the work of great learning to shew it, but it would be a matter of great length. *That which is crooked cannot be made streight, and that which is wanting cannot be numbred*, Eccl. 1. 15. Solomon saith, Pro. 22. 15. *that foolishness is bound in the heart of the child*. Then it is natural to man; whereas wisdom is above nature. But it is not only in the heart of a child, but in that of grown persons, that folly is bound up. *Authoritatem habemus senum, vitia puerorum*: We have the gray hair and gravity of old men, but the vices and foolishness of children. Look upon the Customs of Nations. It may be we see not the foolishness of our Customs, because we are bred in them; but when we travel abroad, we will laugh at the fashions of other Countries, and men of other Countries will laugh at ours. We laugh at the *Turks* for being covered

vered and sitting before their Betters, and they laugh at us for expressing our respects by standing whole days on our Legs, and bare-headed, killing our selves in a complement. We laugh at Nations that bury their dead by the High-ways; But they have more reason to laugh to see us dig out the bones of our Ancestors to make room for new bodies, as if the Lord's earth were not wide enough to afford room for our bodies, without dispossessing one another after our death. We laugh at our Neighbours beyond the Sea for having no entertainment in their Funerals; and they laugh at us for drinking over our dead Parents. So the several Nations will bear witness of folly one against the other, till all the Nations of the World pass for fools by a mutual inditement.

And how much of that folly is seen in all Mens actions? To be most busie to lay in provision, when they are towards the end of their Journey; To devise ways to lose their life under the style of passing their time, for our time is our life; To damn their Souls for ever with swearing and blaspheming, and get neither pleasure nor profit by it in this life; To spend all ones care and cost upon the body, a Tenement for life, and none upon the Soul, which is a Free-hold for eternity, either of misery or glory; To take
delight

delight in that which breeds everlasting grief. To wear Plasters where there is no sore; To lose ease and health to please the eyes of others; To displease God, that we may please men; To sin in the dark, because God shall not see us; To think that by winking we shall make God wink too, and that if we think not of God, he will do as much for us.

But nothing proveth the folly of the World more fully than the several Religions. Some Nations worship the Stars, some a Monkey, some the Fruits of their Countrey, some the Onions and Leeks of their Garden. Some worship together God that he may do good, and the Devil that he do no harm. Some worship Images of Wood and Stone, and say to them, *Deliver me, for thou art my God.* Some Sects startle at the Lord's Prayer and the reading of God's Commandments, as binding the Spirit, and make open irreverence in God's service a point of Reformation. And the height of folly is, that to maintain these follies they have turned Kingdoms upside down, overflown the Land with a Sea of bloud, and gone about to build the Church with Cannon-shot.

And that every one may look within himself, all our several sins, all unrighteousness, fraud and wicked craft is meer folly.

ly. Wherefore all over the *Proverbs* the wicked are called *fools*. Thus Ch. 14. 9. *Fools make a mock of sin*; and 13. 19. *It is abomination to fools to depart from wickedness*, and Ch. 10. 23. *It is a sport to a fool to do mischief*: for though a Man contrive mischief never so cunningly, is he not a fool to contrive mischief, since all mischief in the end falls on the pate of the contriver? Is he not a fool to make a mock of sin, seeing that sin draweth the wrath of God, and sinks the sinner into Hell? Is he not a fool to make a sport of offending his terrible Judge before his face, and play with his own perdition? Is not the unconscionable greedy man a fool, to wound his Conscience and venture his Soul to get a little Money by ill ways, seeing that when he dyeth he must leave his Money behind, and carry his galled Conscience along with him? Is not the chole-
rick revengeful man a very fool, to plague himself to punish his Neighbour? for *the cruel man troubleth his own soul*, Prov. 11. 12. he shall never do half the harm to his enemy that he doth to himself. Is he not a fool to take vengeance out of God's hands to whom it belongeth, and draw vengeance upon his own head? Is not the envious man a very fool, who cannot be well unless his neighbour be ill, and is sick because another is well? Is not the drunkard a fool, to make
him-

himself so with excess of drink lose his understanding, destroy his Family, and damn his Soul? Finally, Is not the loose Christian a very fool, who knowing that life is short, and death certain, and God's judgment terrible and unavoidable, will not take care to serve God with fear, and make provision of faith and good works? And have we not all a grain of folly, in that we labour for that bread which perisheth, more than for that which endureth unto everlasting life; and take more care of our mortal body than of our immortal soul; and repose our trust upon the temporal Gift, not upon the eternal Giver?

Our folly would be more apparent, if God left us to our selves, and did not mend or prevent by his wise providence the inconveniences that we all run into by our imprudence. Certainly all men lack wisdom; and those only have some measure of wisdom, that acknowledg their lack of wisdom, and their need to ask it of God.

2. But this is the misery of the World, (and it is the *second* thing implied in these words, *If any man lack wisdom*) that most Men think that they do not lack it. For these words signifie so much in other words, If any feel his lack of wisdom, and would have it mended, let him ask it of God; for those that do not feel it, are the veriest fools

fools of all fools ; and those that have no wisdom, desire none, and pray for none. *Ignoti nulla cupido.* They that most want wisdom are they that know it less, and therefore have least desire to have it. *Wisdom is too high for a fool*, Prov. 24. 7. And the reason why they have no desire for it, is, because they think they have it already. Of all the distributions that God hath made in the World of his gifts, there is none that is less grudged at than the distribution of Wisdom, for every one is contented with his portion. For Wealth and Honour, we envy the portion of our Neighbours ; we think they have too much and we too little : But for Wisdom, every one thinks he hath enough for himself and others ; and believeth that if he had the State to govern, all things would go far better than they do. If you hear one say in a jesting way, I wish thou hadst more wit and I more money ; believe it, there is more than jest in that saying, for we are prone to believe in earnest that our neighbours have far less Wisdom than we have, and we far less Estate than we deserve.

Whereas we should be of the quite contrary disposition ; we should be well pleased and thankful for that portion of Estate which God hath allotted unto us, as more than we deserve ; and lowly conceited of

our proportion of Wisdom and understanding, as less than we need. We should not compare our Temporal condition with men of better means; that will make us envious and discontented: nor our Wisdom with men of lower parts; that will make us proud and careless to advance in wisdom. But we should compare our Estates with them that have less, to make us thankful and charitable; and our proportion of Wisdom with them that have a greater proportion, to make us humble by the sense of our weakness, and diligent to pray and study for more wisdom.

3. The bane of our proficiency in Wisdom and Goodness is presumption; for without God's gift it is not to be had, and he that believeth that he is already possessor of that gift, shall never beg it at God's hands. It is the *third* thing implied in these words, *If any man lack wisdom. Si dixisti satis est, periisti* (saith St. Austin) If thou sayest, I am wise and good enough, thou art undone. Οἷσις ἐγκοπή περικοπῆς, said *Bion*, Opinion of advancement is a hindrance of advancement. For as Armies must always be moving and in progress; keep them from advancing, they will undo themselves: So it is in our Christian warfare; If we think that we are gone far enough, if we advance not in holy wisdom, we go back and decay of necessity.

cessity. And those will advance more, that know how short they are in their spiritual advancement. *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of God*, Matth. 5. 3. Those poor in spirit are they that are conscious of their poverty. O this is a great advance, from poverty to the kingdom of Heaven. They that think themselves near to it by their wisdom, are further from it by their presumption. Thus the Pharisee swollen with the opinion of his righteousness returned not justified to his house; But the humble Publican was justified, who stood afar off confessing his sins and bewailing his want of righteousness.

My Brethren, the more you are convinced of your lack of wisdom, the fitter are you to ask it, and more in the way to receive it. There is always shame and misery coming from a high conceit of ones self, scarce ever of a conceit too low. When you pass under a low Door (saith *Bernard*) if you hold your head too high, you will get a knock; but in holding your head too low there is no danger. It is better exceeding in that way, for God giveth grace to the humble, and *raiseth those that are bowed down*, Psal. 146. 8.

Take this for a true Maxime: Never any obtained wisdom and mercy to salvation at God's hands, that did not present himself to him with acknowledgment of his lack of

wisdom and need of mercy. It is the way of God's dealing with us, described by the Blessed Virgin. *He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he hath sent empty away. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.* But unhappy they that will presume to draw near him, full of their opinion of wisdom and righteousness, for they shall be sent empty away. Those saving gifts are only for those that acknowledg and bewail their spiritual wants. Christ was sent to preach the Gospel unto the poor. None shall ever get of him those best riches, that applyeth not himself to God as a beggar.

I have insisted much upon that point, our lack of wisdom, and the necessity to know that want. For if we can know that once, that which follows will be learned of it self, *That we must ask it of God*; and that which comes next will also follow of it self, that *God will give it liberally.*

Of God then let us ask wisdom, which we want so much. Not of Humane and Pagan learning, although there also wisdom may be found; But it is not their own, it comes from God the giver of all good gifts. But wheresoever it be, let us ask it of the Giver himself; Let us go for wisdom to the Spring; To God who is *the Counsellor and the Wonderful,*

ful, Isa.9.6. that is, (after the Hebrew style) the wonderful in counsel, the only all-wise and giver of wisdom.

One may say, why shall we ask it of God? God hath given it us already. He hath given us his Son in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge: He hath given us his word, which is the mine and rich store-house of wisdom. It is very true: But as they that have their bread in their cup-board, yet ought to say, *Give us this day our daily bread*; Likewise they that have the holy Word of God at hand, have need to ask it of God. For as our bread without that blessing and feeding influence which floweth from God, will not feed our bodies; so the very Gospel without God's especial assistance will not feed our consciences. We may have Scripture in our hand, yea in our memory, and yet want that wisdom of God unto salvation which Scripture teacheth.

For as the Father hath sent us his Son which is his wisdom; so the Father and the Son together send us their Spirit, which Christ so often promised to his Disciples, to make the wisdom of his word effectual upon our hearts and minds. We have need then to beseech God that Christ make that promise good to us, That his Spirit work upon our spirits, with that feeling, that effectual instruction which both enlightneth

the understanding and converteth the Soul. For this Wisdom from above, sinks deeper than any other knowledge, and opens a new Closet in the Soul, which all the wisdom of the World cannot find. Of which Closet *David* speaks, *Psal. 51. 6. Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden parts thou shalt make me to know wisdom.* It seems then that man with all his study, yea though he have the Word of God at hand, cannot make wisdom to penetrate into those hidden inward parts of the heart, unless God himself put his immediate hand to it, to break open a way into that hidden closet for his divine wisdom to sink in.

O then let us ask of God that heavenly wisdom which we lack, and cannot get without his inward teaching, though we have it taught by our Ministers; *for the natural man comprehends not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned,* saith *St. Paul*, *1 Cor. 2. 14.* Let us beseech the Spirit of God to be himself our teacher of wisdom, and to teach us how to ask wisdom of God, both for the *matter* and the *manner*, and so much we have ready set down in his Word.

For the *matter*, the wisdom that we must ask of God, consisteth in these *two* principal things, his *knowledge*, and his *love*; for each
of

of which I will furnish you with a Prayer of St. Paul's prescribing. For God's knowledge this: *Eph. 1. 17, &c. That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, may give us the spirit of wisdom and revelation, in the knowledge of him: The eyes of our understanding being enlightened; that we may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the Saints, And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power.*

The other Prayer for God's love, is, *Eph. 3. 14, &c. I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole Family in Heaven and Earth is named, That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all Saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of God which passeth knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fulness of God.*

This double furniture of Knowledge and Love was that which made the wise Virgins to approve themselves wise indeed, having each of them a Lamp of faith and holy knowledge, and pouring into it the oyl of love, and practice of good works. This oyl

makes the Lamp to shine clear, and without it the Lamp grows dim, and soon goeth out, as the foolish Virgins found it.

O let us beseech the great and good Spirit to give us both the Lamp and the Oyl, to give the true knowledge of himself, and of his blessed will unto our understanding, and convert our hearts to love him and keep his Commandments. That he give us justifying faith to embrace God's mercy thro' the merits of Jesus Christ; And to that end that he make our faith to be working by love, and fruitful in all good works. That he endow our souls with an entire love of God, charity to our Neighbours, uprightness in our conversation, humility, patience, the ornament of a meek and quiet Spirit, which before God is of great price; that *wisdom which is from above, first pure, then peaceable, gentle and easie to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisie, Jam. 3. 17.*

It is easie to know what wisdom we must ask of God, but it is not so easie to ask it *well*. We are soon satisfied about the *matter* to be asked, not so soon of our *manner* and performance of that duty of asking wisdom at God's hands; For all the difficulty lyeth on our side. God commands us to ask wisdom, and tells us what wisdom, and promiseth to give it, if we ask it well; God
giveth

giveth liberally, but I fear we do not ask faithfully and according to his will. Either we ask not holy wisdom of him, or we ask it so that we are afraid that our prayers should be granted. *You ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss*, Jam. 4. 3. For he that loveth his profit and sinful pleasure with all his heart, cannot ask in good earnest that he may love God with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his strength; for then he must love no more his lust, his pots, and his unlawful gain, upon which he hath set his whole heart; he must abstain from all unconscionable, licentious and uncharitable courses, and bid them farewell for ever. That goeth hard with carnal worldly men. If ever they ask that wisdom at God's hands, and say after the Minister this Prayer of the Church, that it may please God to give them a heart, *to love and dread him, and diligently to live after God's commandments*, they are afraid to be heard; they hardly find in their heart to say, *We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord*. They feel something within that pulls them back. Then our first prayer for wisdom must be, that we may have the grace, that we may have the heart to pray for it; that God subdue our carnal avernesness, and encline our appetite to ask wisdom with our whole heart, with an unfeigned sincere desire, that we may say after *Isaiah 28. 8.*

The

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The desire of our soul is to thy Name, O Lord, and to the remembrance of thee ; and say for our selves St. Paul's prayer for the Thessalonians, which shall be my conclusion, Now the very God of peace sanctifie you wholly, and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ ; To whom with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, now and for evermore. Amen.

The End of the Fifth Sermon.

The Rich and Poor meet
together.

SERMON VI.

PROV. xxii. 2.

*The Rich and Poor meet together : The Lord
is the Maker of them all.*

THere is a levelling Principle among
meer self-seeking Men, that there
ought to be equality among all
Men, and that no one in the State should
be richer than others. High-way-men are
of that Religion, if they have any. But cer-
tainly the most Democratical State that can
be imagined, cannot subsist with that equa-
lity. As there must be an unevenness in the
fingers of the Hand to make it serviceable ;
so there is need of some inequality in Mens
conditions for the subsistence of Civil So-
ciety : Without that, there would be no
Govern-

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Government, no Order, and no mutual help
in a Policy.

Blessed is the State whose Statutes are so copied out upon God's wisdom, which makes poor and rich to meet together, that the poor are kept from being indigent, the rich from being unlimited, both from being injurious to each other; and where all meet in God, the Maker of them all, with mutual reverence and love.

Our Text consisteth of *two* Considerations evidently distinct, yet the first depending upon the second. For the reason why *the poor and rich meet together*, is, because *God is the Maker of them all* by his wise providence. But *Solomon* begins by the effects, and thence proceeds to the cause, which is the most natural order for knowledge.

That we may consider after *Solomon* how the poor and rich meet together, and deal with them both impartially, we shall examine them about the principal heads of Man's life, their *Nature*, their *Fortune* or condition, and their *spiritual* and *moral* parts. It will be found that in these *three* things, which comprehend all that can be said of Man, the rich and the poor meet together.

I. Begin we by their *Nature*. It is known that both are of the same mould, produced by the same natural ways, and that the same
Elements

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Elements enter into their composition. This is known, but not considered; For both poor and rich mistake their Fortune for their Nature. All men coming naked into the World, enter presently into the fortune of their Family. Some fall from the Womb upon the ground, and there stay; but most get as it were upon Stilts, some higher, some lower, according to their Parents degree. And the Children as soon as they begin to know any thing, mistake their Stilts for their Legs. They take their degree to be their own substance; an error which they keep long. One must live the third part of a Man's age before he can distinguish betwixt his being a Man and his being a Gentleman. Hence this ordinary expression that such a one is *great by birth*: An improper speech; for although Greatness be tied to his Birth, it is by the Law of the Nation, not by that of Nature; for Nature bestowed as much cost upon the Plowman's as upon the Emperor's Son. Both came naked into the Midwife's lap.

This I say, not only for great Persons, but for inferiour people, who having less breeding have also less knowledge of themselves and the World. Experience sheweth, that many times those are the proudest that have least cause for it. Many stand highest upon their points, that stand not very high from
the

the ground, and at the least push will fall into the dirt. Finding themselves lyable to contempt, they take great care to defend themselves from it: But they take a wrong course for it. The true way for the poor to get respect, and for the rich to keep it, is humility, and knowing ones self. Let the great remember that they are Men, and the low that they are poor men. Let none mistake his Condition for his Nature, like Children that mistake their Nurse for their Mother. For what course soever God giveth to our Fortune, Nature will keep her course, and make the Pulse beat alike in the rich and poor, and inflame both alike with Fevers, and chill both alike with Rheumes, and finally close the Eyes of both alike by Death, which draweth the curtain of the Stage, and then the Comedy of Fortune is at an end. Nature which brought them forth naked, taketh them in more naked than she brought them forth, stripping the Soul off the body, and the very Flesh off the bones.

Truly it is in death especially that poor and rich meet together. Death divesteth all the Actors of this Play of Life, of the false properties of Fortune. And then who can say, This is the noble, and that the ignoble dust? You will say, The rich have magnificent Tombs, The poor lie in the dust. But stay a while, *Sunt & sua fata sepulchris,*
The

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The very Tombs have their death ; and when they are worn out and pulled down, (an ordinary accident in Turns of State) the Bones of rich and poor are hurled down into Charnel-houses : No distance there between the Superiour and Inferiour, *Mors sceptrum ligonibus aequat.* All are, dust to dust, blended together. *The great and the small are there, and the servant is free from his Master,* saith Job. Job 3. 19.

Now as poor and rich meet together in their *Weakness*, they meet also in the *Excellency* of their Nature. To be made after the Image of God, and though naturally corrupt, yet naturally capable to know God their Maker, to love and praise him ; The only Creature in the world that God loveth, and for whom he sets the whole course of this great Nature on work. This common Excellency of Mankind, greater than man himself is able to imagine, is so high, that the differences arising from the petty degrees of Fortune are scarce considerable.

As after admiring the distance between the Earth and the Firmament, the difference of Hills and Dales is counted for nothing ; so after the contemplation of the excellency of man's Soul, and how God by the work of Grace makes her partaker even of *the divine nature*, saith St. Peter, the difference of Civil conditions be-

2 Pet. 1. 3.

tween

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tween men is of small consideration. Sure
he that is proud of his Fortune, is not wor-
thy of his Nature ; and no more he that is
dejected with his Fortune, and out of a spite
that he hath not outward goods at will,
makes no use of his inward goods to glorifie
God, and comfort himself in him. Let the
sense that we have God's Image within us
(now I hope reformed in some measure, and
mended by Grace) breed in us such a respect
to our selves, that we take great heed of de-
filting such a sacred treasure by wilful sin.
Let a generous esteem of the excellency to
which God hath raised our Souls, giving
his Son for them , make us condemn the
contempt of men. And in consideration of
that Excellency, common to God's children,
let the poor and the rich meet together in a
charitable esteem one of another.

II. But as poor and rich meet together in
Nature, (to which I have also joyned the
mending by *Grace*) we must shew that they
meet also in *Fortune*. And whereas this may
seem a strange affirmation, it shall be made
good by comparing the poor and the rich in
the revolutions of Houses and States, and in
the commodities and incommunities of pri-
vate persons.

For the first, it is visible that great and
low Houses have their alterations. Every
one

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one hath his turn. The Imperial House descends in time to the Cottage; The Cottage groweth in time to the Imperial Palace. Some Houses are worn out by their antiquity; Other Houses grow and flourish because their Nobility is fresh and young. And as new Houses rise up and old Houses go down, they meet in the way. Let a Noble House stand never so fast, it is impossible but that some Cion shall once in an age be grafted upon a mean stock, where the poor and the rich, the noble and the ignoble, shall meet: But that is one of the least Entercommunes.

This is greater. Any man may observe any where, as much as *Servius Sulpitius* writes to *Tully*: As he travelled through Greece, he had observed here the place where *Megara* once stood, there the ruines of *Argina*; at his right hand the desolations of *Pyreus*, at his left hand the ashes of *Corinth*; and there broke into a lamentation at the Human frailty and the instability of the strongest and fairest things of the world. Stand ye in any place where you may have a large prospect, You may say as much as *Sulpitius*, There is the ruine of an old Castle, once the Mannour of many Thousands a Year; About it many little Houses raised out of the decay of the great one, as so many Bees out of a dead Oxe. Yonder the

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corrup-

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corruption of an Abby hath been the generation of a Knight ; whose fourth generation was turned out by a swarm of begging

Fryars. Then say with *David*,
 Psal. 39.6. *Surely man walketh in a vain shew ;
 Surely he disquieteth himself in vain.*

1 Pl. 75.7. || *God putteth down one and setteth
 up another.* Upon him, not upon
 the quick-sand of the world, I will build my
 trust, and there stand fast, among the verti-
 ginous turns of the world.

Observe that the nature of man's desire
 and that of worldly objects which mens de-
 sire fasteneth upon, meet quite cross. For
 our desire naturally tends upwards ; every
 one would rise and increase : but worldly
 wealth and greatness tend downwards. *Si-
 dunt ipso pondere magna ; Ceditque oneri for-
 tuna suo.* They are heavy things and sink
 by their own weight. There is need of a
 great industry, and the blessing of God upon
 it, to keep them up. No wonder then that
 the rich meet so often with the poor, and is
 reduced to his condition. Wherefore it
 would be a wise course for us to place our
 desire, which naturally tends upwards, upon
 those things which ever keep above, and
 never go down. This was St.

Col. 3. 1, 2. *Paul's Philosophy : If ye be risen
 with Christ, seek those things which
 are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand
 of*

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of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth. Besides those revolutions which come in a manner by course, and by the decaying nature of Humane things, the provoking sins of men and the just wrath of God upon them worketh greater and more sudden changes in the World.

God poureth contempt upon Princes, and weakeneth the strength of the mighty, saith Job. I have seen servants upon horses, and Princes walking as servants upon the earth, saith

Job 12. 21.

Ecc. 10. 7.

Solomon. Many besides him have seen as much. How fast doth the turning of the wheel bring dirt to the top, and the top to the dirt; and with another turn bring dirt to dirt again? So fast that the poor and the rich in their sudden shifting of places, are gone a great way before they can perceive that they have met by the way. It is marvellous in our eyes, but it is the Lord's doing, let no man murmur. God imployeth sinners to punish sinners, *Assur* to punish *Israel*, *Babylon* to punish *Assur*, *Persia* to punish *Babylon*, *Greece* to punish *Persia*, *Rome* to punish *Greece*. God imployeth hungry Invaders to get the ill gotten wealth of proud and lazy Nations. And when those Invaders are grown arrogant and insolent, God maketh them a prey for other Invaders. The Histories of the World are full of those

Turns. But we need not look for the great Revolutions, to find the meeting of the rich and the poor; You may compare them nearer in the daily condition of particular Men, and find them meeting in condition, even while they are keeping the greatest distance.

Here I would do a good service to the rich, helping them out of the envy of the poor; and a good office to the poor, shewing the little reason they have to envy the rich.

For if the rich have some advantage above the poor, it is either in the *ease* of his *body*, or in the *content* of his *mind*. As for the *body*, the rich fareth more plentifully, but not always better; It being certain, that plain Diet with a daily labour is better for health, than plenty and variety of dainties with little or no labour: for then the more food, the more preparatives and accumulation for indigestion and sickness. Take the two extremes of the two conditions, the Lord and the Beggar. They will get the same diseases out of different causes. The one gets a Consumption by short and course diet; the other gets the like by a surfeit: But the last is more ordinary and more dangerous; *Et pejor ex saturitate quam fame macies*. The rich hath softer beds, but the poor hath harder sides, and can sleep in any bed, and without bed. The

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The rich hath more superfluous things. But in things necessary he goeth little beyond the poor. Neither of them liveth by the work of Goldsmiths and Painters, but by that of Plowmen and Bakers. *The profit of the earth is for all, the King himself is served by the field.* If the poor have but sufficiency of meat, drink and raiment, it is hard to say what the rich hath above him. Solomon saith, that *there is much food in the tillage of the poor:* Whereas in a rich house many times there is so little, that he is put to borrow of his poor Neighbour. *Sæpe etiam dives à paupere plura petebat.* The rich is as often beholden to the poor, as the poor to the rich.

And now for *content* of mind, I must needs say, that the rich in one point hath wherewith to content himself more than the poor, That he hath more means to do good, and to share in his measure with God's happiness, for *it is more blessed to give than to receive.* And doing good is God's nature and felicity.

Yet the poor is not deprived of that happiness, witness the poor Widow that put but two Mites in the Churches Treasury, yet in the judgment of the Lord Jesus, she had given more than the rich with their great gifts; because he valued the gift

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not by the quantity, but by the heart.

But as the rich hath more means to do good, he hath more temptations to do evil. And whereas the rich often curseth the time that ever he had means and power to do those things which have made him guilty and miserable; the poor may praise God for that happy poverty, which hath kept him many times from running headlong into sin and ruine. *Hac si neque ego, neque tu fecimus, non finit paupertas facere nos.* Blessed be God for keeping us in sobriety and fear by the weakness of our condition.

And for content in the use of *necessary* things, the Apostle teacheth us, that a small thing will make the poor and the rich meet in that point: *Having food and*
1 Tim. 6. 8. *raiment, let us be therewith content.*

No more did Jacob ask to satisfy his mind that the Lord was his God. Those holy men conceived no good in outward things above the use; for what is above the use is of no use, unless you will call it use to serve to torment the mind, as Solomon found it, and yet he had plenty of wisdom with plenty of riches.

If the poor and the rich have wisdom and grace that make them contented with the means they have, they are met together; Both have sufficiency: If both want wisdom and grace, They are met together;
Both

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Both are in want. If the folly of the rich be towards lavishness, he will soon meet with the poor, yea with the beggar : But if his folly be a covetous folly, he is met with the poor already : For he that wants means, and he that hath not the power to enjoy his means, are two poor men. But he that is rich at the out-side, and poor within, hath the greater wants. *Multas inter opes inops.*

It was the ingenious cruelty of an *Italian* so to kill his enemy, keeping him tied, and giving him good meat to smell, but none to eat. Miserableness doth the like cruel usage to the wretched rich man. It tieth him near his goods, but giveth him no leave to feed upon them, and so starveth him. It is the singular folly of that vice, that whereas other passions, both good and bad, labour for their own satisfaction, this laboureth against it. For never any glutton abstained from a good morsel out of gluttony, nor a wanton from his pleasure out of wantonness : Covetousness only pineth her man ; for the covetous man abstains from spending money, out of longing to have money to spend.

But methinks I hear the poor murmuring, Tell me not of *satisfaction* in the *mind*, while I feel real *wants* for my *body*. I want that which I see my neighbours have.

I will shew presently what satisfaction a Christian may and must take in poverty: I will but shew before to the envious poor, that if the wants of his rich neighbours may comfort him, he shall find there matter of comfort. For there is none of them but meeteth with the wants of the poor. He hath seen but little of the world that hath not observed how poor and rich have enough to do to come to the years end; and that the great Wants attend the great Estates. The Beggar wants a garment, and the Great man wants a hundred thousand Pounds to pay his debts. It will be easier to supply the first want than the second. Many a rich man should enjoy a quieter sleep, if he could as easily get relief for himself as he relieveth his meanest neighbours that eat his scraps. The very greatness and numerous Attendance of a Noble house, sheweth the greatness of the Masters need. For that which appeareth to the eyes of all, is, that there is need of much bread to feed so many bellies: But what the Master hath to feed them, that is concealed with an industry attended with a bitter care. That multitude of Officers and Servants brings more care than use. He laboureth more for them all, than any of them laboureth for him. *Multorum dominus est multorum servus.*

Then

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Then great Estates are subject to great Incumbrances. For where many things must concur that the whole may go right, it is impossible but that of those many pieces always some be out of order. A small want, a little rub, will clog a great Estate; as a whole Train of Artillery will stand for want of a Pin. Where there is much to receive, there is also much to lose, and much to tempt foul dealers. Thence comes Care, the inseparable companion of wealth; a far greater care than that of the poor man, who hath nothing but a little meat and clothing to care for. It is the observation of rich Solomon: *The sleep of the labouring man is sweet, whether he eat little or much; but the abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep.* For although the revenue be more than enough, one hath not the power to use it whensoever he would. To have and to hold, meet always in a Lease, but not always in the enjoying. || *A man wanteth nothing of all he desireth, yet God giveth him not power to eat thereof, but a stranger eats it before him. This (saith Solomon) is an evil which I have seen under the Sun, and it is common among men.*

Eccl. 5. 12.

|| Eccl. 6.
1, 2.

Now as the rich meets with the wants of the poor, so doth the poor meet with the plenty of the rich; For what doth the
rich

rich do else with his plenty, but to feed many poor? Many perhaps by his Charity, but more by his Grandeur, to keep many Attendants about him, and set many poor to work? Yea, often he feeds them so against his will, that they become rich, and he poor.

When we look for an increase of our Estate, we make account then to save so much: But when that increase is come, we find the truth of Solomon's sentence, *When goods increase, they are increased that eat them; And what good is there for the owners thereof, saving the beholding of them with their eyes?*

The difficulties sticking to an Estate make those that have none, patient and willing to go to service. And being more sensible of real commodity than of conceited generosity, they will hold it a greater ease to eat that which they have not provided for, than to be troubled to provide it, and then see it eaten before their eyes.

When the poor liveth thus by the plenty of the rich, he may call that plenty his own; for enjoyment is the only true possession. And so for the pleasures of the rich. For what I could ever see, the servant and the poor neighbour shares with the Lord in his sports and magnificence. Stately Buildings, costly Gardens, curious Walks,
pleasant

pleasant Water-works, spacious Parks, dainty Musick, Coursing, Hunting, Hawking, the Servants are as much delighted with these as the Master; And if they be of my mind, they shall take more pleasure in them than the Master, because all these curiosities cost them nothing. They may relish the pleasantness of them, and not be concerned to mend the defects.

III. You have seen how poor and rich meet, both in their *Nature* and in their *Fortune*: So they do also in their *Moral* and *Spiritual* parts. This needs not to be much insisted upon: for neither the one nor the other condition giveth *Wit* or *Vertue*; and neither of them is exempted from the *vices* of Mankind. Thus much only: Some *Vices* are more incident to riches and greatness, as immoderate Self-love, and little considering the interests of others; Covetousness, Luxury, Wantonness, insatiable Ambition, Pride, and Idleness. These two, Pride and Idleness, are set with *fulneß of bread* by *Ezekiel*. Ezek. 16. 49

Some Vices also are more incident to poverty, as Envy, Stealing, Baseness, Ignorance of that a civil Man and a Christian ought to know and do. Yet those Vices creep into both Fortunes, and in them the poor and the rich meet together; For one
may

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may be a niggard, though he have nothing to save or spend. Under raggs there is often a proud ambitious heart. And God hath done much for Mankind, by giving less power to them that have most insolency. Woe is to the World when War or Sedition puts power in the hands of such

Pro. 28.3. Men, who will justifie Solomon's

saying, that *oppression coming from poor men is like a sweeping rain that leaveth no food behind.* For as great Cattel after they have eaten a pasture, leave yet some remnant for small Cattel to bite; but small Cattel will eat to the very root: So the oppression that cometh from great men and rich, is far less outrageous than that which is wrought by the raskality, for those leave nothing, but sweep all clean. *Plures servorum irâ cecidere quàm regum.* The wrath of Varlets hath done more harm to the World than that of Kings.

And so for other Excesses. Inferiour men not being able to equal the parts of their betters, will strive to out-do them in their Vices. Debauched Tradesmen and idle Servants will dice, swagger, and swear like Gentlemen.

On the other side, the rich will meet also with the poor in their Vices. For it is not only the poor that envieth the rich. Many envy their neighbours Estate, that have
most

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most reason to be contented with their own, as *Ahab* sick for *Naboth's* Vineyard. They are the great persons that commit the great robberies: A poor man will steal a Sheep, and is hanged for it: A King will rob a Kingdom, and is worshipped for it. The poor is apt to be ungenerous and base, because poverty beateth down his spirit: And the rich will fall to the same Vice because his spirit is softened with ease and plenty. Both are much alike dejected with their losses, as it is as much pain for a bushy head of hair as to a bald Pate to have a hair pluckt off. Commonly ignorance goeth along with poverty. Yet it were to be wisht that many rich Persons were not as ignorant out of laziness as the poor out of want. For it is less shame for a labouring man to understand nothing above Corn and Cattel, than for a Gentleman to have no meditation above bowling, and never to look up to heaven but to see his Hawk flie.

We have seen wherein poor and rich meet together, comparing them in their *Nature*, in their *Fortune*, and in their *spiritual* and *moral* parts, having regard only to those incidents which are most usual in poverty and riches: But now let us labour to make both the conditions to meet in the state of *Grace*.

To

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To that end we will turn the affirmative doctrine of the Text into a precept. Let poor and rich meet together, making this interchange sweetly exprest by Saint

Jam. 1. 9, 10. *James, Let the brother of low degree rejoyce in that he is exalted, but the rich in that he is made low.* He saith first,

Let the brother of low degree rejoyce in that he is exalted. Let him remember that the Son

of God made himself low to make us high, and poor to make the poor rich. Let him rejoyce that Christ leads him the same way as himself went, through humility to glory.

Let him rejoyce that being made slender by poverty, he shall get more easily in at the strait door of the Kingdom of Heaven, than the rich swelled with pride and love of the World. That God hath chosen the

Jam. 2. 5. *poor of the world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom of God, which he hath promised to them that love him.* That

out of his love he giveth them but short diet of the goods of this World, that they may be hungry and thirsty after the plenty of a better. That he giveth them but a light load of wealth, that they may with more ease travel to the kingdom of Heaven.

And that if one may have the grace to be the child of God, brother of Christ, and Citizen of the new *Jerusalem*; his low condition in this frail life of few days doth but

ser

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set off his heavenly Nobility, as a black foyl
under a bright Diamond.

On the other side, let the *rich rejoyce in that he is made low.* Let him make himself poor by humility. For this is a doctrine of a most necessary observation, That no man is accepted before God nor saved, but considered as poor. The Church is represented by *Ezekiel* as a poor, naked, polluted and forsaken child, when God Ezek. 16. cast his first look of compassion upon her.

God in the redemption of Mankind considereth all men as naked of means, naked of help, naked of merits. They that boast or trust in any of these, and are rich and strong in their own conceit, set a barr between themselves and the mercy of God by that conceit. It is the right sense of that sentence of the Blessed Virgin, *He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he hath sent empty away.* And of the Prophecy of *Isaiah* which our Saviour was pleased to Luk. 4. 18. make the Text of his first Sermon, That God *had anointed him to preach the Gospel unto the poor.* Be ye sure that unless you make your selves poor, the Gospel will yield you no benefit. And to be poor as God would have you, you need not throw your Money into the Sea, and you need not to be dehorted from that. But wean your
heart

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heart from the World, Wean it from self-love, Wean it from self-conceit. So much is being *poor in spirit*; a quality prescribed by Christ to all that will be once owners of the Kingdom of Heaven.

To be poor and have the kingdom of heaven, Who would not be thus poor? Let every one make himself poor, that he may be rich. A lesson expounded and urged to the full in that divine doctrine of St. Paul,

¹ Tim 6. *Charge them that are rich, that they*
^{17, &c.} *be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us all things richly to enjoy. That they do good; That they be rich in good works; ready to distribute, willing to communicate; Laying up for themselves a good foundation, that they may lay hold of eternal life.*

That the poor and rich may meet together to their eternal comfort with charity and mutual respect suitable to their several conditions, St. Paul in my Text giveth a strong reason, a consideration which obligeth them to it, *That God is the maker of them all.* For the End of Solomon, and our End in all that was said before, is double; That the rich despise not the poor, and that the poor murmur not against the rich. These two Ends shall be obtained if this doctrine be once well learned, that *the Lord is the Maker of them all.*

First,

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First, let not the rich despise the poor; for the poor is the work of God. *He that mocketh the poor despiseth his Maker,* saith wise Solomon. For despising the work is despising the Work-man. It is reproaching the Creator, that he hath made a contemptible work; That he hath made a man, and hath taken no care that he should live like a man. But who will be so bold as to find fault with God's wisdom? *Woe unto him that saith unto his father, What begettest thou?* saith Isaiah. Pro. 17.9.
Isa. 45.10.

Though you despise the poor, God despiseth him not; He hath made him with his own hand; He hath framed him after his image; He hath bestowed his Son, and his Son hath bestowed himself upon him. God's grace in this World, and his glory in the World to come, will be never the further from him for his being poor. Rather if his poverty be in the lowest degree of indigence, God's mercy towards him is the more evident, because he is fed by miracle, and sustained without means. Which sheweth that God is his daily Purveyor, and as it were his daily Maker; who giveth him life when he hath nothing to live upon. Such objects will move the rich Christian to say, It is the Lord's doing, that I depend not upon this Man's assistance, but he upon mine. My better condition must stir up my thankful-

M

ness

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ness to God, and my charity towards my
poor Neighbours.

The same doctrine that God is the Ma-
ker of poor and rich, ought to stop the
murmuring of the poor against the rich. So
much is murmuring against God. Shall the
Clay say to the Potter, Why hast thou made
me thus, and why hast thou made him thus?
Nay, God is the Judge, he bringeth down
one and lifteth up another; And who shall
say to him, What doest thou? Since God
hath made us and placed us in our several
stations, let us all learn this lesson of Saint

*Paul, Brethren, let every man where-
in he was called, therein abide with*

God. For it is not the high degree, but the
well behaving our selves in our degree, that
makes men honourable before God. Every
one of us is an Actor on the Stage of the
World, of which God and his Angels are
Spectators. It is not bearing the Person
of an *Alexander*, or a *Cesar*, that will obtain
the applause of those great Spectators, but
acting that part well which is assigned to us
by our great Master, though it be but that
of a Servant.

And because the life of a Christian is a
commerce with God and the World, and
he hath a Talent intrusted to him to trade
with, Let us be covetous to trade with the
true riches which lie upon poor and rich a-
like.

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like. Let us covet, let us husband, that good part of *Mary* which shall never be taken from them that get it; those great and precious promises which go so far as to make us partakers of the Divine nature. There be many that say, *Who will shew us good?* But as for us, let us say, *Lord lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us.* There are many that worship Mammon; But as for us, let us say, *Lord incline our hearts to thy testimonies, and not to covetousness.* Let us labour to be of those poor in spirit, rich in faith and good works: Yea, let us make bold to take God for our portion, and then we are rich. All that God hath is ours, if God be ours. And his is the Kingdom, and the power and the glory for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Be we poor or rich, if we be faithful subjects of God's Kingdom, we have so much part in the expected glory of that kingdom, as to be sure to be made by Christ, Kings and Priests unto God and his Father; and our glory shall be to give him glory for ever.

The End of the Sixth Sermon.

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Not as I will, but as thou wilt.

S E R M O N V I I .

Matth. xxvi. 39.

-----Not as I will, but as thou wilt.

THE Prophet *Isaiah* speaking of the Lord Jesus in prophetical terms, in the beginning of the 63. chap. breaks out into this question of admiration, *Who is this that cometh in died garments, this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength?* To which question the Prophet brings this answer in the name of the Lord Jesus, *It is I, that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.*

It is the great desire of the Church, and of every good soul, to see once that great Saviour marching in the greatness of his strength, arrayed with magnificence: And

we expect with certainty of faith his glorious appearing, terrible to his enemies, gracious to his redeemed, when he shall come down from Heaven to judge both the quick and the dead, having the Clouds for his Chariot, millions of Angels for his attendance, Light for his Garment, and Glory for his Crown.

But the Prophet in the alledged Text doth admire his strength and magnificence in the lowest step of his humiliation, when he was treading the Wine-press alone, bearing the sins of the World, clad in a scarlet dyed in his own blood. Such was he in *Gethsemane* in the night in which he was betrayed, his Face bowing to the ground, melting in tears, sweating great drops of blood under the horrible weight of God's wrath against sin.

But that lowest degree of his Humiliation was the highest of his Vertue, for then did he *travel in the greatness of his strength*. Then did he bear and overcome the high indignation of God against the rebellious world, in the torments of his body and the anguish of his soul, the contradiction of nature and self-love, and Satan aggravating all these to crush him down.

Yet by all these Satan did but bruise his heel; And he with his bruised heel bruised that old Serpent's head. For then Satan had

had the foil when Christ yielded unto God his Father that meritorious obedience, whereby he denied his self-love and his will, saying, *Father, not as I will, but as thou wilt.*

In these divine words let us consider, *first* Christ's *Vertues*, and *then* the duty of our *imitation*. Our meditation upon Christ's *Vertue* shall be limited to these *four* particulars: 1. The will of God the Father: 2. The will of his holy Son Jesus: 3. That these two wills, in their seeming difference, subsisted together: And *4thly*, how the will of the Son yielded to the will of God the Father.

I. *The will of God the Father*, was, that his Son should be made an offering for the sins of the world; and that he, the same Son, should be the Priest to offer it. God would have him to be *made sin for us*, by the imputation of our sin, *that we might be the righteousness of God in him*. That he, considered as guilty in our behalf, should *bear our griefs and carry our sorrows*; That he should fulfil the prophecies by being *bruised for our transgressions, giving his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them that pluckt off the hair*; that he should *not hide his face from shame and spitting*. Himself did acknowledge so much in his agony. For after he had said, *Father deliver me from this hour*; He added

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presently, *but for this cause came I unto this*
hour. This is that which the Father would.

II. *That which the Lord Jesus would,* or rather that which his humane nature would have craved in that great trial, was, that the Cup of the Cross might pass from him. He was the Son of man, *made of a Woman, made like unto us in all things, sin only excepted.* It was then natural for him to avoid pain and seek his preservation: Passions to which God is indulgent, commanding us when we *are persecuted in one City, to flee to another.* Yea if he had not been careful of his preservation, he had been no true man: If he had had no natural interest to overcome, there would have been no merit in his Passion.

III. Then for the third particular how these *two wills consisted together,* reason will say with great amazement, God will have man to dye, and the man shrinks from it: Christ, God and Man being but one Person, how can he have two different wills, so as to say, *Not as I will, but as thou wilt?*

Christians, the actions of the Lord Jesus have no need of Apology, but our weakness hath need of instruction. To comprehend this, as well as we may, we must be certain, that the wrestling of wills in Christ, was not between the Godhead and the Manhood,
but

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but in the Manhood alone, which disputed with himself. For man being composed of parts as different as the Earth and the third Heaven; the body being earth, and the spirit the breath of God, hath different inclinations according to the diversity of those two parts of himself. And some of these inclinations may differ without sin, although in the end the flesh must yield unto the spirit, when a greater good which is our duty to God, contradicts our natural lawful inclination. Wherefore there is no sin in a natural desire to preserve our selves, when God calls us to suffer; But there is sin in not mastering that inclination, when the great Master of nature chargeth nature to renounce her self, to follow his will, and serve to his glory.

Now flesh and spirit were sanctified in Christ by the personal union of God and man in him; and both flesh and spirit in him joyned to obey God, and serve to his glory. The humane spirit of Christ instructed by God charged his flesh to undergo the cross for God's glory in the salvation of Men: The flesh was not resty, but she was not insensible; If she had been so, she should have lost her nature, Christ had not been a perfect man, and could not have been an offering for Man's salvation.

Let

Let me tell you this again, that you may be found in the faith; Christ being God and man, you must not imagine that there was in his Divine nature, or between his two natures of God and man, such a combat as made him say, *Not my will, but thy will be done.* God is ever the same in his will and nature, and constant to himself. That combat was in that great humane soul of Christ, I say in the humane soul only.

But whereas there are two appetites in man, the one intellectual, the other sensitive; The will of Christ belonging to the intellectual faculty, was ever firm and united with God's will; but the sensitive appetite, though united with God's will, yet trembled, because it was nearer a-kin to the flesh than the intellectual: But while the flesh is trembling, the spirit taketh her and carrieth her away by a perswasive violence to the duty of her obedience.

IV. So then that *holy flesh of the Lord Jesus* which had not shrunk from her obedience, but only trembled at the terrible punishment, now *resigneth her self altogether unto the will of God*, takes at his hands the bitter Cup which he presenteth unto her, and drinks it up dregs and all, saying, *Father, not as I will, but as thou wilt.* As if Christ had said, Father, I deny the inclination

nation of my flesh for her preservation, to follow my higher inclination to obey thee and glorifie thee. I will have no will but thy will : Here our Saviour made his word good, *I came down not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.* Joh. 6. 38.

Both in life and death he exactly followed that rule which he had set down unto himself. He was so earnest to do the will of him that sent him, that he forgot his meat for it. *My meat* (said he) *is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.* Doing that will was his life and living. For that, and with that he lived and dyed. Welcome was the cup of God's wrath to him, since by drinking that Cup he did the will of him that sent him, and finished his work.

O the infinite love ! O the admirable virtue of the Son of God ! Here Angels and glorified Saints stoop amazed and attentive, desiring to look into the depth of this wonder of obedience. *Seneca* saith, that the goodliest spectacle that God beholdeth from Heaven, is a worthy man vigorously wrestling with adversity. Here is a spectacle worthy of God indeed ; his own Son wrestling with the tyranny of the World, with the powers of Hell, with the bitterness of the Pains due to sin, with the horrors of God's wrath, and with the deserved love which

which he bore to his own most worthy and most excellent self. How much was the Father delighted to see his Son victorious by his Humility in his greatest Agony, over all the forces of Satan the Prince of this World? and when nothing remained worthy to be overcome but himself, overcoming his own will with this divine resolution, *Father, not my will, but thy will be done.*

You see how the Lord Jesus made himself a free-will offering. Without that he could not have made propitiation for our sins, whether you consider him as the *Priest* or as the *Sacrifice*. Being the *Priest*, his will to offer was requisite; for it was a thing never seen that a Priest should be dragged to the Altar to do his Office: and his *offering* had need to be, not only an act of obedience, but of chearfulness. Then being himself the offering, that he might be a *free-will* offering, he must be brought to the Altar by his will. It is true, he was forcibly haled to the Cross and crucified: But he could have avoided that force; Yet he yielded to it. His yielding to that force was bringing his will under God's will, that he might fulfil his own words, Joh. 10. 18. *No man taketh my life from me, but I lay it down of my self.* For herein lieth the price and the efficacy of Christ's Passion, not that he poured his blood, but that he denied his will to do
 God's

God's will, and said, and made it good, *Father, not my will, but thy will be done.*

I purpose not here to treat of the meritorious efficacy of that submission of the Lord Jesus under the will of God in his sufferings, which is the high point of his obedience, and the price of our redemption; but to set before you a pattern for your obedience, that you may learn to say after him, whatsoever God lay upon you, *Lord, not my will, but thy will be done.*

Our next task then after our admiration of Christ's Vertue is our *Imitation*. As Christ said so, and did so, so we must; and our greatest reason so to do, is, because Christ did so. For it is not to be believed that Christ preferred God's will before his own will and safety, to get for us an immunity to do our own will and neglect God's will. Nay, if you will be Christ's partners, you must be his followers. One hath his will bent to his Sports, another to his Pots, another to his unlawful gain, another to his Revenge; On God's name let us deny our wills to do God's will: Which if we do heartily, we shall not fail to find God's will towards us good, pleasant and perfect.

Then the duty here prescribed by the example of Christ is *self-denial*. To deny ones self is a duty not required by the law of Nature,

Nature, or by the Canons of any other Religion : It is a meer Christian command. For it is the proper work of Christian Religion to reform Nature, melt it, and cast it into a new mould of Grace.

Divines will set forth the opposition between Nature and Grace to very good purpose, saying, that Nature teacheth self-love; and Grace teacheth self-denial. And in that subject they insult a little more than needs upon Philosophers for their maxim, That a vertuous life is a life according to Nature.

But there is a misunderstanding in it. For true Philosophy by *a life according to Nature*, meaneth a life according to the dictate of right reason. Now right reason finds in Nature lessons against the disorder of passions and the flattery of self-love. Certainly their moralities of cutting short the desires and hopes of men, and yielding in all things to the orders of the great Maker of Nature, and Governor of the World, comes very near the Christian self-denial. Thus the doctrine of the Church is justified by them that lived out of the verge of the Church, and Nature is pleading for Grace.

Hence it is that the doctrine of preferring sufferings for righteousness sake before an unrighteous prosperity, and subjecting our will unto the will of God, is readily received as long as no more is required of us
but

but a rational speculation and assent of the understanding to the truth of it. But when the same doctrine calls upon our practice in hard trials, then the sensual part of our spirit picks a quarrel with it; and if the will of God call us to suffer for righteousness, we are apt to invert Christ's words, and say, *Father, not thy will, but my will be done.* Wherefore we have need to study the doctrine of self-denial. For to glorifie God in our afflictions with a full concurrence of our will with God's will, is that which we are called unto by our profession of being Christ's Disciples.

For first we have his command for it, *Matth. 16. 24. If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and follow me.* That is, Will ye be my Disciples? Will you be partakers of my kingdom of glory? Then whensoever it shall be my will that you seal your faith in me by your sufferings, consult not with flesh and bloud, but bring your will under my will, and the love of your selves under your love to me. Silence your reason that it may have nothing to object against your duty, but forsake all interests for the grand interest of my glory.

This exhortation to silence your reason is not to perswade you to unreasonable performances. God requires of us a *reasonable service.* Christian Reli-

Rom. 12.1

gion

gion is the great mistress of right reason. Apprehend once that your true self is in God, in whom you breath, and live, and move, and have your being; and so if you espouse any interest which pulls against God, you pull against your original being, and bend against the great principle of your self. Wherefore the wise Disciple of Christ shall acknowledge no other self-interest but that of God's will and glory: And those interests that repine against God's will and glory, he will reject as inconsistent with his well being, because they are inconsistent with his duty.

He will say; Loving my G O D, and caring only to please him, is the ready way to procure my benefit, since I am in God. I will then be of *David's*
 Psal. 73. mind; *To draw near unto God is my good.*

Whereas I should make my self remote from God my good, if I confined my affections and my interest within the narrow limits of my petty temporal advantages and sensual delights. Then indeed, being out of the road of my duty to my God, I should be also out of the way of my sovereign good. I will then turn a learner of the Philosophy
 Isa. 65. 16. of *Isaiah*, that the way to bless ones self on earth, is to bless himself in the God of truth. And to that of my Saviour

viour Jesus, *He that findeth his life, shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake, shall find it.* Mat. 16. 25.

It is the great task of the Christian soul to yield freely unto the will of God, and to labour to obey and fulfil it as much as in him lyeth.

For that end *two* things lye upon us to do: The *one* to search the impediments that hinder the will of man from agreeing with the will of God; The *other* to furnish our selves with the necessary helps to remove those impediments, and to bring our wills under God's will.

1. The *first impediment* is the *large scope* which we give to our *desires*, and the *licence* we allow to our *passions*. For a man used to indulge much unto his own will, hath much ado to curb it, when it is crost by a contrary will of God, and when duty and necessity call him to make his will stoop under God's will; or when he desireth things out of his reach with over-great earnestness. For greediness is a will contrary to God's revealed will, who limits the desires of all Men, Kings and all, to the begging of their daily bread. And if our will be contrary to the will of God's command, can we complain if we see our will crost by the will of his decree? If you ask evil things, or make good things evil by ill asking, or ill purcha-

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sing,

find, find it not strange that God's will keeps no correspondence with yours.

And labour not only to remove your unlawful desires, but to refrain the eagerness of the lawful ; for lawful desires of temporal things turn unlawful when they grow fervent : that fervency being contrary to the humble, meek and calm temper, requisite to be always ready to submit unto God's will.

2. A *second impediment* is our *presumption*. We think our selves so wise in our projects, that we hardly perswade our selves that God can do better. Hereby God is moved to jealousy, and provoked to oppose us ; for he delighteth to confound the wise of this World, and to befool the crafty fetches of conceited Politicians. But that man who is lowly conceited of himself, shall easily submit his will unto the wiser will of God.

3. *Another impediment* is our *wilfulness* and *way-wardness*, so great as though we would make to our selves a God that had no other office but to be an executor of our passions. We complain of light troubles, and sometimes of good things, and find fault with God's will when it is most beneficial. For as Children wantonly brought up, grow pettish and wilful ; so Men that had always the World at will, will storm at the least thing that crosseth their passion, and will
repine

repine against God's good pleasure. Such Men have need to meditate upon this lesson of the Apostle to the *Hebrews*, *You have not yet resisted unto blood, be not weary and faint in your minds.* As Heb. 12. 3. & 4. If the Apostle said, If in great and hard trials you must not be weary and faint, but freely say, *Lord, not as I will, but as thou wilt*; much more in small and easie exercises of your patience. If we must strengthen our courage to resist unto blood, shall we not instruct our wills to wean themselves of their wanton appetites? Let us exercise our wills to patience in small crosses, to inure them to patience and obedience when we shall be called to bear the Cross of Christ, and suffer for his cause.

4. A *fourth impediment* that keepeth us from yielding to God's will, is our *impatience*. We cannot expect God's time. We would have our desires satisfied presently, his Church delivered immediately, his truth and righteousness to triumph without delay. But God doth not go so fast to work as we would have him. He suffers his Church to be trodden under by his enemies, and the Synagogue of Satan to be built with the ruines of his Temple. Must we therefore murmur against his will? Stay, we know not yet what God will do. You shall see that God suffers his fierce enemies to fill

themselves that they may burst. By high degrees he brings them to the steep of a precipice, that they may break their necks with a fall. They shall fall into the Pits of God's vengeance, either living or dead. The tears of the Church in the meanwhile are showres that bring to him a joyful harvest, and God makes use of those tears to wash her spots away. My brethren, though you should stay till after death to see the Church's troubles, and your several sorrows end in glory, the gain is worth the staying for.

Pl. 27. ult. *Tarry the Lord's leisure, be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart: Wait I say on the Lord.* God will do well for us in an acceptable time, if we may have the grace to trust in him and do good. The greatest part of most mens sorrows is their impatience.

5. The root of impatience is *unbelief*, the *last* and the greatest *impediment* of the quiet yielding of our wills unto the will of God. For why do we so shake the yoke and kick against the rod, when God afflicts us? If we dare confess the plain truth, too many think that God doth not do well by doing so. Do we believe that God doth it out of love, or that he is able to bring forth good out of the evil he sends us? Our fears (which are wilful sorrows heaped over the necessary) bring God's all-seeing knowledge in question, and his

his wisdom, and his power, and his love. Either we believe not these, or we do not think of them; and therefore we think not of them, because we do not firmly believe them, and rely not upon them. But whosoever believeth these with a true faith, God's wisdom, his Power, his Wisdom, and his Love to us in Christ, will be easily persuaded to have no will but God's will. To remove these impediments, and conform our wills unto God's will, let us use the following helps.

1. The *first* is, to apprehend well how impossible it is to hinder God's will, how idle to oppose it, how vain to complain of it, especially when the thing is past and done. Will you attempt to cause with your fears, that your dead friend had not dyed, or that a thing done had not been done? Must God to please you, wind back the time past, as you do your Watch? God will have it so, you must will it too. Even the Politicians of this World will teach us to comply with that which we cannot overcome. When they are defeated of their purpose, they will seem to intend that which they cannot mend. What they seem to do with Men, we must do really with God. We must intend what God will have, whatsoever we intended before: since we cannot speed by drawing against him, we must draw with him. Our

strugling against the will and actions of God, is like the fluttering of Birds newly taken : The Fowler that carrieth them in the Cage goeth never the slower for their fluttering. We may struggle, but we must go, since we are carried by the great hand of Providence. It is for mad men to blow against the Wind, and stand quarrelling with the storm : Wise men will run to a shelter. Now our shelter is God's providence. We must shroud our selves by faith under the very hand that strikes us.

2. Another great help to make us soon yield to God's will in our afflictions, is to remember, that God afflicts us to frame us to patience ; And that God may not need to afflict us, vve must be patient betimes. God dealeth vwith us as a Father that chasteneth his Child : If the Child cry too loud, he vvill strike till he hold his peace. Let us silence our cries, and our very will, at the first blows, lest God strike till we will what he willeth. Our clamors against God's rod, instead of staying his blowes will redouble them. Wise Parents rebuke their Children for saying peremptorily, *I will*. So God dealeth with us. He seems many times to say to us, *Since you will have it, you shall not*. But bow under his will, and he will fulfil your

modest desires : *He will fulfil the desires of them that fear him, he also*

also will hear their cry, and will save them.

3. I was saying, that unbelief is the greatest hindrance of our submission to the will of God: Likewise faith is the principal help to bow our will under God's will. Methinks it is a reasonable motion to a Child of God, that he would trust in his Father's love. Should it be a hard thing to perswade God's Children to have a good opinion of God their Father? After he hath given you his Son, and by him redeemed you from Hell, and made you his Children and Heirs of his Kingdom, is it hard for you to believe that he loveth you, and will send you no evil but for your good? Shall ye have much ado to be perswaded that God is wiser than you, and doth that which is best for you?

4. Whosoever loveth God's glory, hath a great help at hand to conform his will unto God's will, if he remember that God willeth nothing but for his glory, and that his glory is his Children's good. This was it that strengthened Christ in his agony, and that which inclined his will to follow Gods will. How great was his agony, when he said to his Father, *Now is my soul troubled,* Joh. 12. 27. *and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour, but for that end came I unto this hour.* His help to make himself strong in that deep bitterness of his soul, was to alledge unto God his Father the interest of

his glory, *Father, glorifie thy name.* Upon which his Father answered him by a voice from Heaven, *I have glorified it, and I will glorifie it again.* This, this, set his mind at rest, and made him freely to take the bitter Cup which God presented to him, saying, *Father, not as I will, but as thou wilt.*

5. A main help to make us speak so, is to exercise our selves in the Love of God; that perfect love which casteth out fear, and refineth the heart from all the dross of self-love and self-interest, and nobly begets a most strict union of our will with God's will. For this being the effect of love, to change the lover into the beloved object; when the love of God hath got possession of a soul, it changeth the will of Man into the will of God: so that a Man hath no more any other will but God's will, and desires nothing but in subordination to God's will. The only skill to have always our will fulfilled, is to will always what God willeth. *David* had found that skill, *Psal. 37. 4. Delight thy self in the Lord, and he will give thee the desires of thy heart.* For having no will but his, we have all our desires, if not in retail, yet in the great. Since God is the Sovereign disposer of all events, if we make our will to concur with that sovereign disposition, our will is done when God's will is done.

Certainly since God resents an infinite felicity

licity in the satisfaction of his will; our resigning and making over our will to his will, imparts to us a felicity proportionate to the degree of our resignation. Our will being ingrafted into God's will, gets an identity or sameness with his will. Thus self-denial for his sake is a holy association with God; And our partnership in his will, doth interest us in all the happiness and glory which God takes in the execution of his will. Wherefore glorified Saints & blessed Angels, whose will hath the most exact and exquisite conformity with God's will, have also the greatest conformity with God's felicity and glory that can exist in creatures. Whereas the Apostate Spirits in their confirmed repugnancy against God's will, have also a total privation of God, and in it the extremity of wretchedness.

The will of God is that *primum movens*, that first mover, which moveth all things: And to the shame of man be it spoken, in all the orbs of natural and moral things there is nothing retrograde against that supreme Mover, but the wills of Men and Devils. Come, let our will follow that great course of the will of our Maker. Let not the freedom wherewith the Creator hath endowed our souls, serve to set them vainly and wickedly against their Maker, but to add chearfulness to their obedience.

7. When all is said, Here is the Example. Here is the precept of Christ confirmed by his practice. Let us look up unto Jesus the Author and finisher of our faith, who having all the terrors of God's wrath upon him, denied his will to follow God's will, which called him to the cross, answering to Gods call, *Father, not my will, but thy will be done.* Who in all his life, and more in his death, expressed this sentence, *Psal. 40. 7.* meant of him, and applied to him, *Heb. 10. 9.* *Lo I come to do thy will, O God.* And see what followeth in the Text. *By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the Body of Jesus Christ.* For it is by that will of Christ submitted to God's will, even unto the death of the Cross, that propitiation was made for us, and our eternal glory purchased. For which, eternally glory be given unto thee Lord Jesus, *the Author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before thee, induredst the Cross, despising the shame, and art set down at the right hand of the Throne of God.* Now to him that hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and made us Kings and Priests, unto God and our Father, To him be glory now and for ever more, *Amen.*

The Meek shall inherit the
Earth, &c.

SERMON VIII.

PSAL. xxxvii. 11.

*But the Meek shall inherit the Earth, and
shall delight themselves in the abundance of
peace.*

THE doctrine of the Gospel being
the doctrine of Vertue, is also by
necessary consequence the doctrine
of Happiness. The not apprehending of that
consequence is the cause of all the misrule
and misery that is in the World. For al-
though Nature and experience taught the
very *Pagans* so much, *Nemo malus felix*,
that happiness cannot consist with wicked-
ness: Yet the great corrupter of Nature,
the Devil, hath perswaded the great Herd
of

of his followers, to seek happiness by wickedness, as the more compendious course to thrive in the World. For (say they) why should we wear out our lives in hard labour, to get a poor living by a beggarly honesty, when by cutting an Usurer's throat in his Bed, we may ransack his Trunks, and make our selves presently wealthy for all our lives? Wherefore this great and wise man *David* laboureth in this Psalm to perswade the World, both by precept and experience, that wickedness will not prosper, but that a great and sure reward attendeth righteousness.

But because the punishment of the wicked, and the reward of the righteous come not always so soon as our impatience looks for; therefore the Prophet exhorts us patiently to expect the Lord's leisure, and to anticipate our reward by the comforts of a clear conscience, and of a meek and contented mind, trusting in the Lord and doing good. This is the perpetual argument of that long Psalm, of which the whole drift is exprest thus: *Cease from anger and forsake wrath; fret not thy self in any wise to do evil. For evil-doers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth. For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea thou shalt diligently seek his place, and it shall not be found. But the meek shall inherit*

herit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

The last Verse, to which I confine my Meditation, requireth these two Considerations; The *Virtue* recommended, viz. *Meekness*; And the *reward* appointed to the meek, *They shall inherit the earth, and delight themselves in the abundance of peace.*

St. Basil defineth thus the virtue of Meekness: Κράσις ψυχῆς σύμμελος. It is a right proportioned temper of the mind. That may be the definition of a naturally mild disposition, which when it comes not out of pusillanimity, or natural dejectedness of mind, may be placed amongst those which Philosophy calls *semi-virtutes*, half-virtues, which are not virtues yet, but fair dispositions towards virtues. But the *meekness* prescribed by Christ is not a natural disposition, but a Christian virtue, when the work of grace correcteth the excesses of Nature inclined to the contrary vice, or perfecteth the natural into the virtue of meekness. So Christian meekness is not a virtue born with us, but learned in Christ's School, as Christ himself tells us, *Learn of me that I am meek and humble of heart, and you shall find rest unto* Mat. 11. 29 *your souls.*

Meekness, when Nature is a true disciple of Grace, is the quiet temper of a mind well

well grounded in God's truth, and ruled by his will. When a Man hath learned so far of the nature of things, as to know the true price of those things which Men labour for, and the true danger of those which they fear and avoid; And out of that right information hath learned so to govern his passion, as never to be disorderly moved, either for or against any thing of the World. And above all things of the World, he hath laboured chiefly to learn the price of a Man's soul; Which being so high valued by the Son of God, as to give himself to be crucified to redeem it, the wise Christian seeing himself bought out of perdition by that high price, considers all other things of the world as inferiour to him, and not worthy that his noble spirit should stir with an irregular notion for any of them.

Above all things he hath studied to know the nature of God, whose image he beareth; and seeing that in God righteousness and peace meet in a perfect union, he laboureth to represent it in his docible and obsequious mind, as when a clear sky is represented by a calm water. He hath applied himself to apprehend the right and power of that great Maker and Master of all things over his creatures, especially over man his image, who therefore ought to have no will but that of his Maker and original. Whereby he
gets

gets this advantage, that keeping an even pace with God's will and providence, he hath all that he wills, because he wills all that God wills, and that God's will is his own will. Thus true meekness brings along with it magnanimity, and these two with prudence are the fertile soil for all vertues to take root and grow in.

Of this vertue of meekness learn vve the Offices, tovwards God, tovwards our selves, and tovwards our neighbours. *Towards God*, meekness vvill be seen in our patience under God's visitations of affliction, in submitting our reason to his doctrine, and our vvill to his vvifdom and loye. *Towards our selves*, the office of meekness is to have alvays the ear open for learning and further instruction. To hold the reins of our appetite, never suffering passion to run wilde, but keeping it within the tedder of piety and reason. *Towards our neighbours*, the duties of meekness, are gentleness, peace, giving, forgiving, returning good for evil, overcoming wrath with patience, and hatred with charity.

But of all the duties of meekness those belong most properly to our Text, that most regard God and our selves. These are a peaceable acquiescence to God's will, and contenting our selves in our condition. For this is the Prophets drift in these words,

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The meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight himself in the abundance of peace: Not only to give them a promise of a happy change, when the wicked shall go down, and the good shall rise up, (a matter much prest in the whole Psalm) but to teach us, that in a meek and godly disposition lyeth a sufficient & contenting inheritance in the earth, and such as will delight the soul with abundance of peace, both in this world and in the world to come.

How then shall we get that ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which before God is of great price, and of a contenting nature to our soul?

The *first counsel* for that we will take out of the reasoning, of which our Text is part. The great and ordinary discontent is at the advancing of the wicked above the good, and more yet (if we dare speak the truth of our hearts) at the advancement of others above us; for envious persons hold them all wicked and unworthy that are advanced above them. In that temptation take instruction of our Prophet, a few lines before our Text: *Fret not thy self in any wise to do evil.* God will find a time to bring down the insulting proud. Leave that to him.

Before you leave that comparison, which our hearts are much set upon, of our condition with that of others, especially of the wicked;

wicked ; I would ask you that hope for a part in the *everlasting consolation and good hope through grace*, whether you would change your part in Heaven with the part of the wicked prospering in the World ? Sure you would not. Then stand to your choice, and grudge not to them some wealth and jollity in this life ending in eternal perdition, like the fair River *Jordan* falling into the filthy Lake of *Sodom*. Without looking so far as the World to come, you would not change your present heavenly comforts with their treasures and their galled Consciences.

Look upon all the persons of the World good and bad ; You shall hardly find any with whom, all things considered, you would make a total change. Envious persons and idle wishers would have the Wealth of such a man, the Greatness of another, the Health of another ; A conceit too vain even for a Romance, and fit only for a dream ; to skim out all the good for ones self, and leave all the evil for others.

But seeing that *οὐδὲν ἀγαθὸν ἀμεσικτόν*, there is no pure and unmingled good ; and that God in all conditions of men hath balanced good with evil : What man can ye fix upon, whose good and evil you would have together ? You would have the Wealth of such a one, but you would not have his

Gout: The Greatness of another, but not his endless Vexations. A Peasant envieth his Landlord's Estate, and the Landlord his Plow-man's Health. *Solon* was saying, that if all men had brought their evils into a common place of exchange, every one, (all considered) would bring home again his own evil rather than to stand to an equal division.

So the *first counsel* comes to this, Not to take exceptions at the partage which God's providence hath made of conditions in this World; But acknowledge in silence the wisdom of God in the temper of his Justice and Mercy towards his Subjects and Creatures, of whom he disposeth according to his pleasure. And who durst say unto him, what doest thou?

The *second counsel* shall be to avoid pride, the great enemy to meekness and contentedness; for it makes a man incompatible with his neighbour, with his own self, and (which is worst of all) with God Almighty, who resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

For the *third counsel* for disposing our hearts to that meekness which is the mother of contentedness, I recommend Saint

Paul's precept unto you, Brethren,
 1 Cor. 7. 24 let every one wherein he is called therein abide with God. Let every one content

tent himself with that portion which God hath allotted to him. Yet hereby St. Paul prohibits us not to increase our portion, when we see it fairly attainable by lawful industry; for then we may presume that God calls us to it: But if you fail in the pursuit, if your condition decrease, let your desire decrease with your condition, and keep an even pace with God's providence.

To that end my *fourth counsel* shall be, to entertain no strong passion for any thing of this World. Strong passion is the greatest enemy to meekness, as much as the storm is to the calm. The ordinary causes of unsuccessful pursuits are eagerness in the attempt, and not knowing the thing that we labour for: Against which Origen gave this Caveat, *Pondus ultra te nē leves*, Strive not to lift up a weight too heavy for thee. A wise Christian finding that he is not master of the things that he would compass, will bestow his labour to become Master of himself, and carefully follow David's counsel and example, Psal. 131. 1, 2. *Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty; Neither do I exertise my self in great matters, or in things too high for me. Surely I have behaved and quieted my self as a child that is weaned of his mother; My soul is even as a weaned child.*

Before you have brought your heart to that meek disposition, you shall not be able

to conceive how the meek shall inherit the earth. A wise man finding that he is not master of the things he would compass, shall labour to become Master of himself, till he find that it is not in outward things, but in the meek disposition of his heart, that the contenting inheritance of the heart and abundance of peace consisteth.

Ps. 131. 3. The next words in the alledged

Psalme afford the *fifth* and the great direction for quieting the heart, and framing it to meekness and contentedness, *Let Israel hope in the Lord from henceforth and for ever.* Be certainly perswaded of God's power, wisdom, and fatherly care, then you cannot but possess your souls in patience, meekness, and contentedness. Suppose that God with his great liberal hand would spread all the honours and treasures of the World before you, and told you, Either choose for your selves, or let me choose for you: Were it not the right course for you to tell him, Lord, thou art sovereignly good and wise, and lovest us better than we love our selves; We beseech thee to choose for us. Now this is our case, God hath chosen for us; Let us stand to God's choice, and rest contented. This perswasion of God's loving care and wisdom will heal your hearts of the fretting of Envy, and ease them of the unquietness of Desire; for thereby you shall resolve your minds that
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whatsoever God with-holdeth from you, is neither necessary nor expedient for you; and that when God seeth that we need more, he will give us more; Supposing still that we do what lyeth in us to supply our wants: For the Apostle saith indeed, *Cast your care upon God*; but he saith not, *Cast your work upon God*. God forbids unbelieving carefulness, but he injoyneth diligent working, and promiseth blessing upon it, *Psal. 128. 2. Thou shalt eat of the labour of thy hands: Happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee.* By the labour of the hands, which literally doth not belong to all, understand all the duties of lawful industry; For our industry ought to be a fellow-worker with God's providence. And that is a great help to contentedness, when a man can say, I do what lyeth in me, I do what I can, Let God do what he will.

Let that conformity with God's will be the *sixth counsel* of meekness. It is the great receipt for contentedness, *Cast your care upon God, for he careth for you*; And howsoever he dispose of you, let his will ever be your will. It was the practice of *Socrates*, (for I will bring in a *Pagan* to make Christians ashamed of their unquietness and impatience under the hand of God) When any cross happened unto him, he would say, εἰ ταύτη φίλον τῷ θεῷ, ταύτη γινέσθω, *If it please*

sed God so, so let it be done. And Epictetus another Pagan, αἰ μᾶλλον ἐκείνο
 Arian. E- *δέλω τὸ γινόμενον· κρείττον γὰρ ἡγοῦ-*
 pist. l. 4. c. 7 *μαι ὁ ὁ θεὸς δέλει ἢ ἐγώ. I will always*
like that best which cometh to pass; for I hold
God's will to be better than mine. A doctrine
justified by the practice of the great Master
of wisdom, the Lord Jesus, who said in his
agony, Father, not my will, but thy will be
done.

He suffered by obeying the will of God, but that conformity to God's will brought him soon after to a full conformity to God's glory for ever. If we may have the grace to put on that conformity to God's will, whether to submit to his decree, or to obey his commands, with a meek and free heart, we shall get by vertue of Christ's merit a conformity to his glory. So I pass from the duty of meekness, to the reward of it. *The meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.*

Here you have the two desirable things, *plenty and peace*; for *peace* in the Prophetical style of the Old Testament signifieth all prosperity.

It is certain that the inheritance of Heaven is promised to the meek by our Saviour, who calleth them the poor in spirit, *Matth. 5. 3. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.* And he saith two

Verfes

Verses after, *Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.* Where manifestly he had a regard to the Text of this Psalm which we now expound, and their inheritance of the Earth meets with their inheritance of Heaven. St. Peter joyneth them both, *We* (saith he) *according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness,* and that appointed, as in our Text, for the reward of meekness. For thus it followeth, *Wherefore beloved, seeing that we look for such things, be diligent that you may be found in peace without spot.*

2 Pet. 3.13.

In that revolution, if we be found of him in peace, that is, with the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which before God is of great price, we shall be admitted into that inheritance of new heavens and new earth, promised unto the meek. A certain promise, but dark to us as yet. Blessed be God that the felicity which we are called unto, passeth our understanding, and that we may expect most undoubtedly that inheritance which we conceive very imperfectly.

The right use of this promise is double. The first to make us study the duty, that we may obtain the reward. If God find in us that precious ornament which he so highly valueth, of a peaceable, meek and quiet spi-

rit, concurring in all things vvith his vvill with a Christian humility and contentedness, he will reward our meekness with that glorious inheritance of new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. The *other* use is to lift up our hearts from this old earth wherein dwelleth unrighteousness, to the new earth and new heaven together, where only pure righteousness and clear happiness are dwelling and permanent for ever. That whereas the ungodly go beyond the godly in the inheritance of the earth promised unto them, we may remember (and would to God we may remember it well) that it is in another and a better earth that the promise is fulfilled. The performance of God's promises is certain, though to us the manner be as yet obscure, and the time uncertain. Let the men of the earth glut themselves with the goods of the earth, till they rot in the earth; and never return to claim any inheritance in earth, but to fetch their bodies, to go along with them to hell. For our part, after that our bodies have slept out their appointed time, resting in hope in the bosom of the earth, and our souls have waited near God in joy for the great and final restitution; we shall in a renewed body and soul, redeemed with Christ's blood, and sanctified by his Spirit, enjoy new heavens and new earth, refined into a fit habitation
of

of holiness and glory. And these we now embrace with a hope which maketh not ashamed, because the love of God and faith in his promises are lively in our hearts, and there make future goods already present.

But shall we put off altogether to the life to come the promise that the meek shall inherit the earth? Is there no place for it in this life? No promise do we find in God's Word, of a constant worldly prosperity going along with righteousness. But we find God better than his word, and that piety and righteous dealing is the sure way of thriving in the world, if we except the times of persecution for the Gospel. But then the constant sufferers get an unspeakably great recompence another way. It is now the time of those sad trials. The Lord strengthen the Champions of his truth with his vertue from above, that they may fight the good fight, keep the faith, and obtain the crown of life.

But I say, where there is no quarrel about Religion, in the world, as wicked as it is, uprightness is the sure course for prosperity. It will not be hard to shew that the meek and godly have the best and surest wealth of the earth. The experiments of this truth are very ancient. *Solomon* had found that *wealth gotten by vanity*, (that is, by ill ways) *will be diminished*: but he that gathereth with
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the hand, (that is, by honest labour) shall increase. Gamesters will get much and lose more. Houses built up with extortion, will not stand long; but quiet and laborious honesty will leave standing houses to posterity. Wealth is the reward of meekness, goodness and wisdom; Rags, hunger and the Gallows are the purchase of injustice and contempt of God: so that a man that hath but common sense and ordinary experience may

say after *David, Verily there is a reward for the righteous; Verily there is a God that judgeth in the earth.* St. Paul lived in the time of the great oppression of the Church and himself, Yet he could find, that *godliness was profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.*

Our Text, *The meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace,* is a sentence of holy Philosophy, That it is not in the outward possession, but in the mind of him that possesseth it, that the benefit of an inheritance lyeth, *prout est animus qui ea possidet*: Even as your mind is disposed, and useth it well or ill, your inheritance in the earth is a benefit or a mischief unto you. So those have the true inheritance of the earth, not that have most land, but that have the most comfortable use of that they have. They most inherit the earth that most enjoy

enjoy it, and that the meek do ; for they enjoy their portion in it with inward peace and contentment of mind. They truly inherit the earth, because they enjoy what they have as God's gift, and rejoyce in it. They eat their bread contentedly, because they ask and receive their daily bread at the hand of their Father which is in Heaven. It is God's precept and promise in this Psalm, *Trust in the Lord and do good ; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.* What portion soever of the land that God gives to them that trust in him and do good, he makes it a sure blessing. They are truly fed and comforted with it.

Psalm. 37.3.

He that by a frugal meal hath preserved health and strength, hath truly enjoyed his meat and drink : But he that hath got a surfeit at his plentiful table, and thereby a mortal consumption, hath not enjoyed his meat, no more than a desperate man enjoyeth his sword, when he hath run it into his own bowels. It is that fore evil which Solomon had seen under the Sun, riches kept to the owners thereof to their hurt ; rich men eating in darkness all their days, with much sorrow, wrath and sickness, and the abundance of the rich not suffering them to sleep ; while the labouring man doth enjoy a sweet sleep, whether he eat little or much.

Eccl. 5.

That

That eating in darkness and sorrow to heap up for the future, when one hath means to eat with comfort, is condemned by Christ, *Luke 12.* for he calls the

*Luke 12.
20, 21.*

rich man a fool who maketh not a present use of his wealth, but puts off the enjoyment of it to years to come that are not his, for in that very night his soul was required of him. Here then among other precepts, he to whom God giveth abundance, is taught to do good to himself with it, and to *rejoyce in his labour, for it is the gift of God.* Now none can do more good to himself by his plenty, than to do good to the poor members of Christ, and to be rich in good works.

But because God giveth not riches to every man, nor to all that have riches, power to eat thereof, but many times strangers eat it before them; We must get out of our Text a higher doctrine: That in all conditions meekness affordeth that inheritance of the earth, whereby a man is delighted with abundance of peace. Of which we have a rich example in St. Paul, who saith, *I know*

Phil. 4. 12.

both how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I am instructed, both to be full, and to be hungry; both to abound, and to suffer need. All that is an amplification of that he had said in the Verse before, *I have learned*

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in whatsoever state I am, therein to be content. O, that possession of meekness is the inheritance of the earth. He is the heir of the earth, not he that hath large possessions in it, but he who by his meekness is pleased with his condition in the earth, as the portion allotted to him by God's wise and loving providence.

Why is the meek content and rich, even in want? Because he is *meek*, and hath his wealth within, a full trust in God, the sense of his love, a full concurrence with God's will, a free relyance upon his wisdom and fatherly care. So much is his present inheritance of the earth, in expectation of the fulfilling of that double promise pronounced by Christ, *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.* And again, *Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.*

In the mean while, *the little that a righteous man hath in the world, is better than the riches of many wicked,* saith Da- Ps. 37. 16.

vid. As if you said, that a little box of Diamonds is better than great stacks of straw. For as it is not the Box, but the Jewels within it that are precious; so it is not that little condition that a righteous man hath about his outside which is precious, but the inside, that ornament of a meek, quiet, religious and faithful spirit in his inside, which is bet-

ter

ter than the riches of many wicked. So a little or a great estate grow precious, *ratione adjuncti*, by reason of that which God makes to go along with it.

So to lift up our hearts from the Gift to the Giver. After I have exhorted you to meekness, which consisteth much in humility ; I must now exhort you to be high-minded, without prejudice to humility and meekness. Let not the inheritance of the Earth, no nor the possession of Heaven satisfie your desires. Let nothing less than God, even God himself, be enough for you. This is the proper estate of the meek. This was

Lam. 3. 24. the portion of *Jeremy*, *The Lord is my portion, saith my soul.* This was the portion of *David*, *The Lord is*
Pf. 16. 5. *the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup : Thou maintaineſt my lot.*

Having said so much, he might well add as he doth, *The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places, yea I have a goodly heritage.*

The good man being strong and rich with that portion, despised the portion of the rich worldling. *The men of the world*
Pf. 17. 14, 15 *(said he) have their portion in this life : Thou filleſt their bellies, they are full of children, and leave the rest of their substance to their babes. As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness : I will be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness.*

After

After this you need not wonder at the contentedness of the meek and godly in all conditions. Having such a rich portion as God in this very life, they may well be contented, and meekly pass by the worldly advancement of wicked men above them, and the injuries which they receive from them, while themselves are *candidati cali*, travelling to the Court of Heaven, where felicity and glory are laid up for them. That hope makes them relish their present inheritance of the Earth, be it great or small. Labour who will for the inheritance of the Earth as it is now, lying under sin and misery : For our part let us labour to make the Lord of the Earth our inheritance, by embracing and preserving his truth, as our most precious treasure, and devoting our selves wholly to his love and service.

If thus you give our selves unto God, he will give himself unto you, bringing along with him abundance of peace : That good peace of God which passeth all understanding, be your inheritance of the Earth never so small.

Being thus rich in God, we shall look upon the World with contempt, saying with more reason than *Socrates* looking upon a great Fair, *Quàm multis ego non egeo!* How many things are in this World which I need not ! But looking upon our portion which
is

is no less than God himself, we shall fix our thankful admiring hearts upon that our invaluable treasure and permanent inheritance, beginning already to delight our selves in that abundance of everlasting peace, wherewith we shall satiate our selves to the full, when we fully possess the God of peace in his kingdom of glory. Where we shall glorifie him, and be glorified by him for ever.

The End of the Eighth Sermon.

I will make you Fishers of Men.

S E R M O N I X.

M A T T. iv. 18, 19, 20, 21, 22.

And Jesus walking by the Sea-side, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a Net into the Sea: (for they were Fishers.) And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. And they straight-way left their Nets, and followed him. And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the Son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their Father, mending their Nets: and he called them. And they immediately left the ship & their father, and followed him.

IN the three Chapters before, S. Matthew relates the Conception, Birth and Infancy of the Lord Jesus: In this he relates the beginnings of his manifestation. Presently

presently after he had been declared the Son of God by a Voice from Heaven, that he might approve himself such, he was led by the Spirit into the Wilderness, to that hard conflict with the Devil, whom he foiled, and presently he was attended and served by Angels. This was in *Judea*, where hearing that *Herod* had cast *John* into *Prison*, he went out of his reach into *Galilee*. From that time (saith the Evangelist in the words before my Text) *Jesus began to preach and to say, Repent, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand.*

All that goes before, is but an introduction to this, which is the Orient of his manifestation. This beginning of his preaching was before he had any Disciple. He that had lately given the foil to the Devil without any help, was able to destroy his works alone. He that had lately been served by Angels, might have used their ministry for the great work which he had in hand, if he had stood in need of help. But because he had made himself a man to converse with men, and to instruct and redeem them, and had but a short time to stay among men; he would have men about him, by whom he might propagate his doctrine among men, especially after his departure.

To that end he chose Disciples to attend him and learn of him; Persons whose memory

mory is venerable in all Ages, as having deserved this testimony from their sacred Master, *Luk. 22. 28. You are they that have continued with me in all my temptations; And I appoint unto you a kingdom; as my Father hath appointed unto me, That you may eat and drink at my Table in my Kingdom, and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*

His call of the first four is related in the words which I have read unto you; In which (without nicety of distinctions) you have four things to consider, 1. The persons called, *Simon Peter* and *Andrew* brothers, that were about their work, casting their Nets into the Sea; and two other brothers, *James* and *John*, of the same trade, that were mending their Nets. 2. Christ's call to them, *Follow me.* 3. What he called them for, *To make them Fishers of men.* 4. Their readiness to obey, *they left all and followed him.*

The occasion of his choice of these men was this: That *Jesus* walking by the Sea-side, saw these two pairs of brethren at their work; If we may call that occasion which was not casual, *occasio à casu*, for there is no doubt that *Jesus* walked on that Sea-side, purposely to meet these men, and make them follow him. Certainly such an important occurrence as the meeting of these four men, which he made afterwards main Pillars of his Church, was appointed by a wise fore-

cast and holy providence. Let us meditate on his wisdom in addressing himself to these men, and choosing them for his work.

It is a great point of the policy of Princes to choose their Servants well, and give them employments adequate to their several capacities. It is not so with God, who hath not good Servants, because he hath made a good choice, but because he hath made them good; And if they shew any ability in his service, it was he that endowed them with strength for the employment. But although it cannot be said that our Saviour chose able labourers for his great work, but rather that he hath made them such; we may commend the wisdom of his choice upon another account, because he chose them of a condition and trade of living suitable to the work which he would employ them in. Consider in the choice of these two pairs of brethren, first that condition which they had *common* with their fellow-disciples, and that which was more *peculiar* unto them.

First then Christ chose them poor, no better than Fisher-men, the others much about that rank, of a low condition. For which we apprehend these reasons.

1. Because they were to lead the way to others unto the Kingdom of Heaven, and therefore had need to be best disposed to enter into it themselves. Now Christ declar-
eth

reth that a rich man hardly gets into the Kingdom of Heaven ; For riches make men proud, dainty, lovers of the World, and intangled with cares ; Palates forestalled with false dainties relish not the bread of life. *The full soul loatheth the honey-comb*, Prov. 27. 7. Indeed the fault of all this is not in the riches but in the men ; And riches do good or evil, *prout est animus qui eas possidet*, as the mens spirits that possess them are disposed. Yet because in themselves they are a burden, and few have the strength to bear them so, as not to be distracted with the cares which they bring along with them, from the care of God's service, and minding the things that are above, they do more often harm than good.

You will say, Christ might have chosen rich men, able to bear the burden of wealth, and tend his service withal, or made them such by choosing them. So he might, and so he hath made many, who being yet more humble and pious than great and rich, have consecrated their Wealth and Power to the building of God's Temple, and promoted his service and glory with a high hand. But there was no use of such men at that time for the work which the Lord *Jesus* had in hand : For being come himself in the form of a servant, and made himself of no reputation, because there was need of humility

both in mind and condition to bring a remedy against pride, the first sin and root of all sins; it was fit he should have about him men of the same humble condition, that without distraction he might go thorough the whole work of his meritorious humility, even so far as to humble himself to the infamous death of the Cross. When *Peter* exhorted him from yielding himself to be killed by the Priests of *Jerusalem*, it was a high scandal unto him, and he answered him, *Get thee behind me Satan, Thou art an offence unto me*: How many of those offences should he have met with? how many Satans, disswaders from his saving design, if he had had about him a company of Nobles and great men of the World for his Disciples? Such an attendance had been altogether unsuitable to his work; *The Disciple is not above his Master, nor the Servant above his Lord. It is enough for the Disciple, that he be as his Master, and the Servant as his Lord*, saith he himself, *Matth. 10. 24, 25.*

Besides, 2. the Son of God was anointed to preach the Gospel unto the poor, or unto the meek, *Isa. 61. 1.* the Original word signifies both. Our Saviour expresth both, when he saith, *Matth. 5. 3. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven.* Some rich in Lands and Money are poor in spirit by their meekness; But that meek disposition,

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position, apter to receive the Gospel, is not so ordinary among persons of high birth and breeding, as among men of a plainer sort, who have fewer provocations to pride, and little matter at home for the love of the World.

Now since it was so ordered by God's providence, that the Gospel should be first preacht unto the poor, poor men were fittest to announce it. Had he sent men of greater rank, his own sentence had not been effected, that the kingdom of God cometh not with observation: There was need for that work of persons that made little shew and great effect, fittest to deal with the poor, with whom they were mingled and sorted already by their condition, that the poor might have that promised preheminance to be the first-fruits of the Gospel.

For the same reason he chose not the learned and the Philosophers, but men without scholarship, ἀγράμματος καὶ ἰδιώτας, as the Scribes and Pharisees term *Peter* and *John*, Act. 4. 15. *unlearned men* and *idiots* in their account. And truly these Fisher-men understood little more than steering their boat, mending their nets, and casting them into the Sea, when *Jesus* called them to follow him. That order of God's wisdom is fully exprest by *St. Paul*, 1 Cor. 1. 27. *God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to con-*

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found the things that are mighty; And base
things of the world, and things that are despi-
sed, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are
not, to bring to nought things that are, that no
flesh should glory in his presence. In which
words two causes are given why God made
use of unlettered men for the first great con-
quest by the preaching of the Gospel; The
one, that they knowing their weakness and
by whom they were acted, should attribute
all the glory of their atchievement unto
God; The *other*, that their opposers which
were all that was eminent, learned and po-
litick in the World, should be stricken with
a greater amazement and confusion, seeing
all their strength foiled by weakness, and
their learning by ignorance.

The conquest of *Gideon* over *Midian* was
somewhat like it, when a handful of men,
none of the valiantest, with earthen pitchers
and candles lighted within, discomfited a
numerous Army of Infidels; For what
were the Apostles but frail earthen Vessels,
bearing the light of the Gospel; by vertue
of which light, not their own, they got that
victory over the kingdom of darkness?
which all the infernal powers shall never
recover, though they struggle never so
much, and afflict those which to this day
bear the same victorious light.

Had

Had God done this great work by persons of exquisite learning and subtilty, the praise had been ascribed to their great parts, not to God; all men being prone to fix their contemplation upon the second causes, and look no higher.

But when men not taught in any School, converted men by 5000. at a time, and confuted Scribes, Pharisees, Doctors of the law, and the most learned of a learned age, with evidence of spirit and power; then was it manifest, that those Teachers were taught by God, and that not they, but God by them was teaching and acting.

And the like was proved by those great and publick Miracles, whereby God gave credit to their Doctrine. Then might all exclaim, *Digitus Dei hic est*, This is the finger of God, which doth these great works. *Verbum Dei hoc est*, This is the Word of God which is attended by these great works. The weaker the Instruments are, the more is evident the vertue of the Agent.

From that which these four Disciples had *common* with their Colleagues, look upon that which was *peculiar* to them. It was not at a venture that the first four whom *Jesus* chose for the service of the Gospel, were two pairs of brethren, and all four partners, and mutual helpers in their trade. For Christ would teach all that labour in the Gospel,

Gospel, that they ought to be brethren in love, as they are brethren in office, and joyn with a holy correspondence and mutual help in the work of the Lord.

Observe also, that they were of a laborious trade of life, and Christ chose them when they were at their work, to prepare them, and those that should serve in the Gospel after them, not to think that they are called to idleness, but to work.

And their occupation to provide food for the body, was to them a preparation to a better function, which provideth food for the soul.

To look to their trade of life more literally, It is evident that their trading upon the Water made them fitter for their Master's service: For besides their Fish which he often fed upon, their Boats were a great conveniency to him, who lived by the Sea of *Tiberias*, and had several occasions, and sometimes urgent necessities to pass from one shore to the other.

But to look to a higher concernment, He chose them Sea-men, because the Church which they should convert by their preaching, was to be of a floating condition, beaten with Winds and tossed with Waves. They were to be sent upon the great Sea of the World. So the Nations of the World are called in many places of Scripture, as *Rev.*

17. 15. *The Waters which thou sawest, are peoples and multitudes and nations*; and Ps. 124. the multitudes rising against the Church are called *the streams and the proud waters*. Upon that stormy Sea the bark of the Church is tossed, between Persecutions on the right side, and temptations on the left; the first being like eminent Rocks, the second like hidden Shelves. To steer our course between these, there is need of the Spirit of God to be our Pilot; and the Church hath need of skilful Pilots to steer it. Neither was it without mystery, that Christ chose men that understood how to steer a Bark, to make of them Pilots to sit at the stern of the Church, that afterwards out of their first trade of steering of a Fisher-boat, which requireth industry and watchfulness, they might get instructions to use the like care in the steering of the Ship of the Church in the Sea of the World.

Greater instructions we may get out of their trade of Fishermen, to which our Saviour alluded, calling them *to make them fishers of men*. But we must consider before, that commanding and effectual Call of their Master, *Follow me*.

This was not the first acquaintance of the Lord Jesus with *Simon and Andrew*. We read, *Joh. 1.* that *Andrew* having heard *John* the Baptist, whose Disciple he was, saying
of

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of Jesus, *Behold the Lamb of God*, followed
Jesus; And finding his brother *Simon*, he
brought him to Jesus, who gave him the
name of *Cephas* or *Peter*. Neither likely
was this his first acquaintance with *James*
and *John*, for they were his Kinsmen. But
this was the first time that he commanded
them to follow him.

Although this Call hath a manifest rela-
tion to the work of the Ministry, yet by
this Call he doth not confer upon them a
mission to the work, but a command for
them to come and bind themselves Prenti-
ces to learn of him to become fishers of men.
Their Mission or Commission to cast the Net
of the Gospel you have, *Matth. 10.* when cal-
ling his twelve Disciples, whose names are
there set down, he commanded them, *v. 7.*
Go preach, saying, The Kingdom of Heaven is
at hand. And it is observable that then, and
not till then they are called *Apostles* in the
History of the Gospel, by *St. Matthew* and
St. Luke. Before they are called *Disciples*,
and to be Disciples they are called by Christ
in my Text.

The Calling and the Mission are confoun-
ded in the ordinary language. For when
they speak of questioning a Minister's Cal-
ling, they mean questioning whether he be
lawfully sent or no. But these are different
things; for the Mission consisteth in the
com-

commission given to the Minister by Authority, an authority inherent to every Church that keeps the Apostolical Institution: But the Calling, to speak precisely, is within a Man's breast, and consisteth in two things; The one, if a man find in himself such abilities of Nature and Grace, as may be useful for the edification of the Church in the exercise of the holy Ministry; The other, if the same man find in himself a sincere fervent desire to imploy these abilities in that holy service. So that one may have the Calling and not the Mission, and another the Mission and not the Calling.

But it is ordinary in these days to have neither, and yet intrude into the function, when a man mistakes a turbulent fancy and an intemperate tongue, for abilities of Nature and Grace; and an itch of contention and separation, for a sincere desire to consecrate his abilities in God's service: And those he styles his Calling, and to that pretended Calling he confines his Mission, despising that of the Church. Whereas there is no surer mark that a Man is not called by God to the holy Ministry, than his despising the Mission of the Church; for God calleth Ministers to edifie the Church, not to hate it and give scandal to it.

Certainly the Call from God is so far from exempting a man from the Mission of
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the Church, that it obligeth him to take it. *Act. 13. 2.* after that the Holy Ghost had said to the Prophets and Teachers of *Antioch*, *Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them* ; These Prophets and Teachers laid their hands on them and sent them ; The Mission of the Church followed upon the Call from God, and so it ought to be still.

It behoveth every one that comes to demand the Mission of the Church, to examine himself seriously before, whether his great Master hath said to his heart, *Follow me*, and learn of me to *be a fisher of men* ; Whether he find himself both enabled and disposed to serve God for God's sake, and so sanctified as to have no greater ambition than to be one of God's faithful messengers, truly resolved to advance to his power the work of the Gospel with life and doctrine.

He that finds in himself those dispositions which cannot come but from God, let him desire the Mission of the Church, and crave God's blessing upon it. Let him go on courageously in his good purpose ; And he shall find in God's service perfect freedom ; He shall find in God's tabernacle a sure fortress, and after a faithful service, he shall enter in to the joy of his Master.

We will leave the Workmen to examine and fit themselves, let us look to the work ;
Christ

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Christ calls his Disciples to learn of him to be fishers of men.

St. Luke chap. 5. relating this passage more at large, gives us a great light to look into Christ's intention. He tells us the very occasion of it; That Christ having preacht from *Simon Peter's* Fisher-boat to the people on the shore, said unto him, *Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. And Simon answering, said, Master, we have toiled all night and have taken nothing; Nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net. And when they had thus done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes, and their net brake. And they beckened unto their partners that were in the other ship (James and John) that they should come and help them. And they came and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink. When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus knees, saying, Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord. For he was astonished, and all that were with him at the draught of fishes which they had taken. And so was also James and John the Sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not, from henceforth thou shalt catch men.*

Some ingenious godly men have well observed, that the Lord Jesus by this plentiful draught of fishes would recompence *Simon* for the use of his Boat: But that which is
most

most observable in this occurrence is this, That this great fishing immediately after Christ's preaching, and immediately before he called these Disciples to be fishers of men, served to make them understand, if not then, yet afterwards, that God would extend a great blessing upon their labour in his word, and give a miraculous success to the Net of the Gospel in their hands. Also that labouring in the Ministry without Christ's appointment, is but toiling in a dark Night to no purpose; but he that lets down the Net at Christ's word, shall find an effectual blessing.

Compare this passage with another after the resurrection of Christ. The same Disciples went a fishing, and that Night they caught nothing: But in the Morning Jesus stood on the shore and bad them to cast the Net on the right side of the Ship; which when they had done, *they took with one draught an hundred and fifty-three great fishes, and for all there were so many, yet was not the Net broken.* And that was the last meeting of Christ with his Disciples; for after a short conversation with them, he departed and went up to Heaven. Who sees not that these two passages were thus made answerable the one to the other, for the same intent in both? In the first, when Christ called *Peter* and his fellows to learn
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of him the trade of spiritual fishing, he made them take a great draught of fishes; and upon that told *Peter*, that he would make him a Fisher of men: In the last when he gave his Apostles their largest commission, and sent them *to preach to all Nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*, he made them inclose a great multitude of Fishes: And both for this end, to encourage them in the work of the Ministry with assurance of success, and let them know, that God sent them into the wide Ocean of the World to inclose a great multitude in the great Net of the Gospel.

But at the first time Christ being yet in the state of infirmity, and the Disciples beginning their Prenticeship, *the net brake*: But at the last meeting Christ being declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, and the Apostles indowed with a great measure of GOD's Spirit, and upon the point to receive more, *the net brake not*. So the first time Christ taught them what they must do, They must fish Men for God; and together put them in mind of their infirmity, *the Net brake*: But the second time he taught them what they might do, They may go about the work of fishing of Men with

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confi-

confidence, The Net will not break; God will do with them and by them exceeding abundantly more than they are able to speak or think.

So in this fishing of Men the Sea is the World, the Net the Gospel, the Fish Men, the Fishing, Preaching the Gospel; He that makes the Fishers skilful and the Fishing effectual, Christ himself. A word of each of these.

We have considered before the Nations of the World in the notion of a *Sea*. It is the style of Scripture. A Sea, where there is a perpetual ebbing and flowing of customs and businesses, where Tumults and Wars are waves which break one another; And the passions of Great men, and the speeches of seditious Orators, are the winds which stir up those waves.

In that Sea men are like Fishes, that come up with the Flood, and return with the Ebb, and are carried to and fro by the Tides and storms of publick fancies and agitations. Yet some are swimming against the stream as the Trouts, out of ambition, peevishness and singularity. There, as in the Sea, great Fishes destroy the small, and many times the small destroy the great; we have felt it by experience; as the Sword-fish destroys far greater Fishes than himself.

Many

Many Monsters there are among those Fishes, prodigies of cruelty, hideous creatures that live on mischief and prey. Some love to swim in the top of the Water, snuff up the Water and blow it up, love to shew themselves and keep a great coil: Others keep in the bottom, and have a sordid nature that loves the mud. There is an innumerable variety of those Fishes. And it were easier to tell the several natures and shapes of Fishes, than the several inclinations of Men more different than the Faces: And that makes fishing of Men a hard trade.

For as all Fishes are not to be taken the same way, no more are Men. And I fear that we that are called to be Fishers of Men, do not study enough the mystery of it. We learn general rules of Divinity, and a most holy and saving doctrine; But who studies so to set it forth, as thereby to catch Men? Who labours for the gift of discerning the spirits? Who understands by what handles Mens souls are to be held and drawn? Who studieth which are the easiest avenues of the several spirits, and which way they may best be won? A skill in which Satan excelleth, and maketh great progresses by it. And we should be ashamed that Cheaters should be so skilful in catching Men for their private lucre, and

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we so unskilful and remiss in catching Men for God and their own salvation.

It must be acknowledged that such as have seen the World, and have known many Men and busineses, have a great advantage for this holy fishing, if withal they be truly sanctified and skilled in the ways of God. But what ! The most sufficient are deficient in that knowledge of Men, when they come to apply it to this spiritual fishing : For whereas most Men use a Vizard of hypocrisie in their dealings one with another, they put on a double Vizard in their dealing with their Pastor, because their carnal mind is enmity against God. And when their consciences are searched, they would tell him, as *Ahab to Elijah, Hast thou found me mine enemy ?* but that they know that godliness hath the general praise, though not the love, in the World ; and they will make a gain of a shew of godliness.

Besides, God himself makes an Apology for our deficiency in the knowledge of Men, *Jer. 17. 9. The heart of man is deceitful and desperately wicked, who shall know it ?* And God himself answers the question in the next words, *I the Lord search the hearts.* Searching the hearts is a work for God, not Men.

This also I will say for us, that whereas the principal art of Cheaters, who are the
great

great Men-catchers, is to take every Man in his humour, we can but seldom make use of that invention, as *St. Paul* did, who was weak to the weak, strong to the strong, Jew to the Jews, Philosopher to Philosophers, wherefore he saith to the *Corinthians*, 2 Cor. 12. 16. that he *had caught them with guile*. But there are so many vitious humours to which cheating Catch pooles do readily condescend, and to which the holiness and rigidness of divine wisdom cannot bow, that we cannot but come short of the craft of this World in the trade of fishing Men.

Well, since we want industry, at least let us not want fidelity; And since our most ordinary fishing lyeth not in singling the several Fishes, but in casting the Net of the Gospel into the wide Sea among Fishes of all sorts, we will *cast* the Net: Some fishes will creep into the mud, those are the covetous Misers; Some will break thorough the Net, those are the stubborn untamed Atheists; Some will stay in the Net a-while and then leap out, those are the Apostates: We cannot help it; We can but cast the Net, God blest the fishing for his glory and Mens salvation.

But then we must be sure to cast the right Net, the true Net of the Gospel, not that of humane inventions. The true Net of the

Gospel is a contexture of the Articles of Christian faith, and the commandments of God, woven together into a strong Network, so equally, that none may hope to be saved by believing without doing, or by doing without believing. To the bottom of the Net the threatnings of the Law must be tyed, as Lead to hold it down; and to the top the Promises of the Gospel, as Cork to hold it up, that the Souls may be kept in both by fear and hope; rejoycing in God's mercy, and withal dreading his judgments. It is so that the true Net of the Gospel must be ordered, and with this or nothing, Souls are fished for God.

But the Devil hath his Nets also, whereby he fisheth more effectually than the Disciples with the Net of Christ. For besides his ordinary snares of unlawful profit and pleasure, whereby he doth professedly draw Souls from God, there are counterfeit Nets which under the title of Gospel and Religion are catching at Lands and Chests. With such Nets the *Pope* for many Ages hath inclosed the whole Sea in a manner, and so doth still; And hath turned *Peter's* Fisher-boat into a Galley of Pirates. That way he hath fished Crowns and Provinces, and incredible Masses of Treasure; And *sub annulo Piscatoris*, under the title of a Fisher, he hath made himself Monarch of Monarchs.

Yet,

Yet, blessed be God, a great stop was put to his fishing in our Father's days, when the true followers of him that makes his Disciples fishers of Mens Souls, not of their Lands and Purses, have cast the right Net of the Gospel, and got out of the Usurper's Net great Kings and Kingdoms, Princes and States, besides other Multitudes that would live within Christ's Net, though under the Cross; And though they were so many, yet was not the Net broken.

But we may say with sorrow, that since those great draughts, the fishing of the Gospel hath proceeded very slowly in these parts, whether it be for the untowardness of the fish or the unskilfulness of the Fishermen, or the sinfulness of both. The sinful World is unworthy to become the prize of Christ. *Master* (may we say after *Simon*) *we have toyled all night, and have taken nothing*: Yet let us say also with him, *Nevertheless at thy word we will let down the Net*. We will toyl again and again, and never leave till thou bless our fishing. But whilest Christ's fishing advanceth little in this European World, his Net is inclosing great Provinces in both the Indies. *The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; They that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, unto them hath the light shined*. Greater fishing of Men hath not been since the Age of

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the Apostles. So much ought to be the joy
of our hearts, and the matter of our praises
to God and his Christ our common Saviour,
and of our prayers that he inclose the whole
World within his Net.

For it is he only that must make his Disciples Fishers of men, both giving them the skill to set the net right, and bringing himself the fish into it. Our part then, as many of us as are called by Christ to this fishing, is first to call upon his assistance, acknowledging our unworthiness and incapacity for such a great work. Lord, who is sufficient for these things! Endow us with thy strength from above. Make us fishers of Men. And as we work by thy command, let it be also by thy vertue.

Then let us fall to work. Which (passing by the many counsels of prudence for catching of men, of which all are not capable) consisteth in these *two* main things, *good doctrine* and *good life*. Let him that will fish men for God be the first caught, expressing by his sincere, diligent and hearty setting forth of the Gospel, and framing his conversation according to it, that he is perswaded of the holiness and excellency of the doctrine, as the sure and only way of vertue, happiness and glory. Let him take heed while he goes about to catch the fish, that he be not caught himself by the fish. For as
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the fish *Torpedo* casts a benumbing venom, which creeping up the Fisher's rod numms the Fisher's hand, arm and brains, and sometimes makes him fall and perish in the Sea ; so Satan makes these fishers of men to meet with tempting objects and seducing conversation, whereby (without a help from above) their piety and zeal may be benumbed to their perdition. Neither is it unusual that the strength of the fish hath pulled down the Fisherman into the Deep. Against such and other difficulties, he that sent his workmen to the work, will strengthen them, if they cast the Net at his word, if they go a fishing for God, not for themselves, and are zealous of God's glory, not their own.

The example of these first Disciples presents another duty to their successors. They left their Ship, their Nets, their Fish, their Father and all, and followed Christ. That this binds not to a literal imitation, their very example sheweth it ; for they made use of their Ship and their trade again, and no doubt but the old *Zebedee* took care of the fish lately taken. But this was an image of that they did afterwards. For it was not long after the resurrection of Christ, when they gave quite over their old fishing Trade, and turned fishers of men only. *Andrew* set up his fishing in *Scythia* ; *Peter* in *Pontus* and *Bithynia* ; *James* at *Jerusalem* ; *John*
in

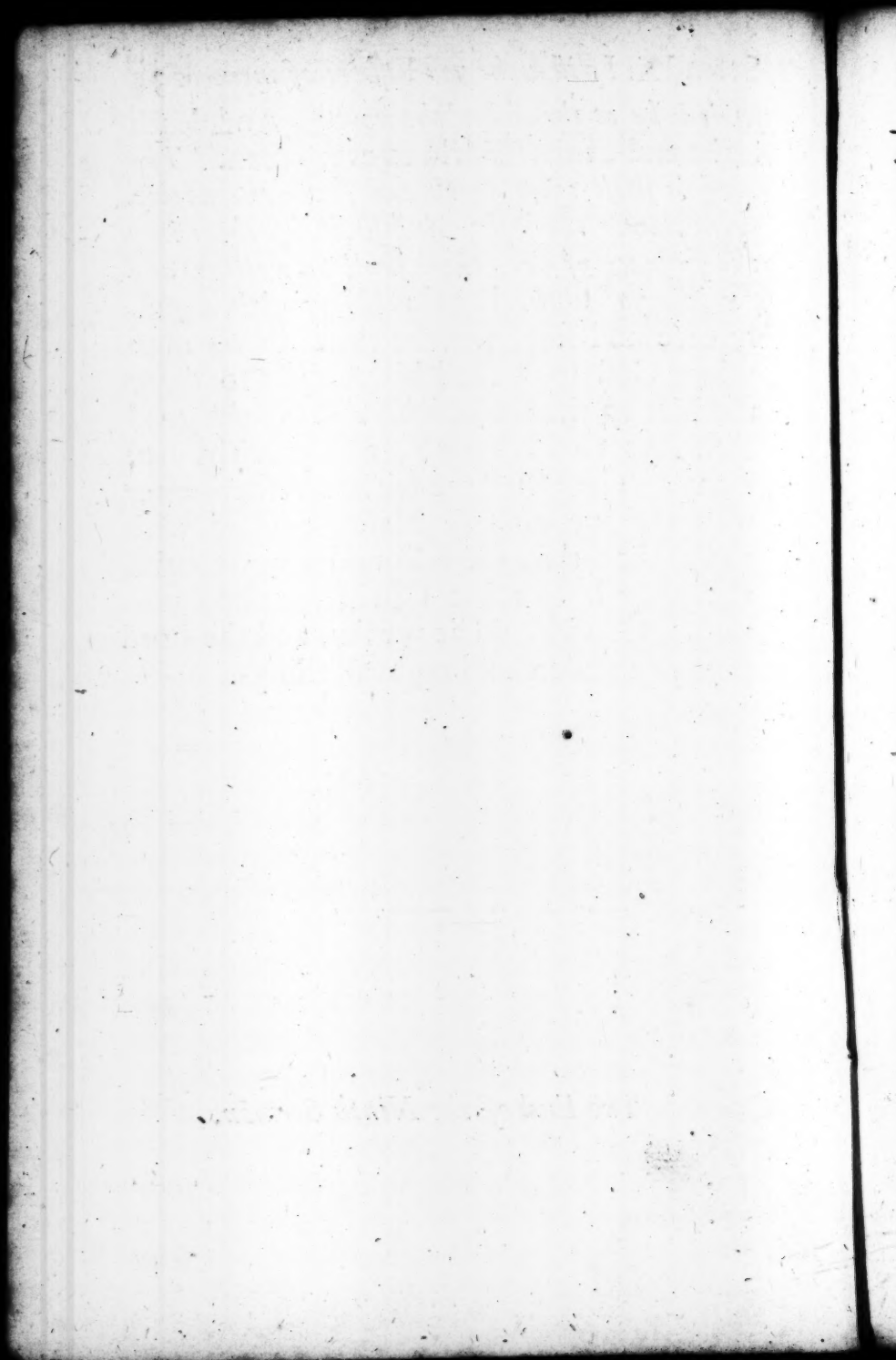
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in *Asia*; and made those great prizes, where-
by the Church has been propagated to this
day.

Certainly this Fishing of men requires a
whole man. When any thing of this World
hinders us from it, it must be left, be it never
so dear: And we ought to take a diligent
care, that the Accessories joyned with the
function, may ever be helps to it, never
hindrances; Else it were far better to be
without them.

But after that Christ hath done his part to
make his Ministers fishers of men, and the
Ministers their part to fish for God; The
part of the people is requisite to yield them-
selves heartily to be taken for Christ. For
let no soul deceive himself, saying, I am
within Christ's Net by my very birth; I
was born in the Church, and received again
into the Church by my Baptism, therefore
I belong to Christ, and I am safe enough.
My brethren learn by Christ's Parable, *Matt.*
13. 47. that by reason of that occasional be-
ing in places where the Gospel is preach't,
the Gospel is compared unto a Net cast in-
to the Sea gathering of every kind, good and
bad. And that when the Net is full, it is
drawn to the shore, and the good Fish is
gathered into Vessels, and the bad is cast a-
way. This is plain enough. Yet Christ
himself adds the moral of the Parable, *So*
shall

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shall it be at the end of the world ; And death is the end of the World to every man. The Angels shall come forth and sever the wicked from among the just ; And shall cast them into the furnace of fire, there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Let this fill us with a godly care and fear, for the time draws nigh when God shall send his Angels to draw the Net to the shore, who will lay the good Fish into God's Vessels, and cast the bad away. Then shall the faithful Fishers enter into the joy of their Master ; And with them they that were so taken for Christ, that they have taken Christ for their portion. Consider what we say, and the Lord give you understanding in all things.

The End of the Ninth Sermon.



God's face and back-parts.

S E R M O N X.

Exod. xxxiii. 23.

And I will take away my hand, and thou shalt see my back-parts; but my face shall not be seen.

Holy Contemplation is the ground of holy Action ; for it is by knowing God, that we learn to love him, and walk before him unto all pleasing. But those Contemplatours come short of the end of contemplation, that think much and do little ; and out of their high reaches bring nothing to the treasury of the Church, but some airy conceits and fruitless questions : like Pilgrims that travel very far, and bring nothing home but shells and feathers.

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But this is the fault of Contemplatours, not of Contemplation, which being rightly used, is the Mother of all vertue and godliness. And indeed since we pray, *Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven*, we must do God's will on earth out of the same motive as Angels and Saints do God's will in Heaven, which is, out of a right knowledge and contemplation of God, without which we can neither do nor enjoy any good.

But then we must avoid *two* ordinary faults about the contemplation of God; the *one* in the *matter*, the *other* in the *manner*. For the *matter*, many miss their aim, because ~~they~~ take their aim too far; Ambition having brought her false rule from the Court to the School, The higher the better.

Besides, they miss in the *manner*; For they will soar up to God, trusting on two weak wings, Natural Reason and Humane Learning, which (though of necessary use) will do no good before they be impt with the feathers of Faith, Hope, and Love, and steered by the stern of Christian moderation. Yet, when all is said, it is hard to take a straight flight in the dark: For although in God's light we see light already, we are at the best in the twilight of God's knowledge in this life; And if we consider it aright, it is our boldness, not our conceits that reach too high. We offend in two Extremes together;

gether; We stay too low through the ignorance of our minds, and reach too high through the intemperance of our curiosity. Wherefore it were a work well-pleasing to God, and well deserving of good men, to fix a land-mark out of God's Word for the just height of our search, and the bound of our meditation together. There is no work more necessary and more wanting in this age, full of questions, and empty of piety. It is my prayer to God, that he would raise some rich and godly mind for that great work; and my request to all well disposed Divines, that they joyn their contributions for it. For my part, after my poverty I will cast in my two mites.

The land-mark of holy Contemplation we must not devise in our conceits, but find it in God's Word. And I really believe, that in God's Word there is no Scripture more majestical and more pertinent to that purpose, than these words of God himself to *Moses*, *I will take away my hand, and thou shalt see my back-parts, but my face shall not be seen.*

Afore I descend to particulars, I must set before you the drift of the Text. In the beginning of this chapter, God provoked with the Idolatry of the *Israelites*, denied to go with them any more, but said he would send an Angel before them. The people hearing these

these evil tidings by *Moses*, fall on mourning ; And *Moses* returning to God complaineth that he had not let him know whom he would send, and beseecheth him to shew him his way that he might know him.

By this you see already that *Moses* found it strange, that God had not acquainted him with his counsel. The same thing he doth expresse soon after ; for having prayed for the People that God would go along with them, he returns to his former request, *I beseech thee shew me thy glory*. By God's answer, we learn that *Moses* by God's glory meant his eternal counsel, for God answereth him thus, *v. 19. I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee, and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy to whom I will shew mercy ;* A Text whereby *St. Paul*, *Rom. 9.* rebuketh the searchers of God's counsel. So then God denieth him to shew him his glory. *Thou canst not see my face* (saith he) *for there shall no man see me and live :* And by his face and glory he doth evidently mean his counsel. But yet so much God will do for him, *Behold* (saith he) *there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock, And it shall come to pass while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand, and thou shalt see my back parts, but my face shall not be seen.*

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The last words, which I have taken for the subject of this days meditation, are the summary of God's answer, and have manifestly these three parts: 1. What hindrances need to be removed that we may see God, *I will take away my hand.* 2. What we may see of him, *Thou shalt see my back-parts.* 3. What may not be seen of him, *But my face shall not be seen.*

As for God's glory, *Moses*, as excellent as he was, yet was neither worthy to see it, nor capable to bear the sight of it; and had need of God's hand before him. This belongs to the last point, *My face shall not be seen.* But even that which mortal men might see, he could not see, unless God took his hand away: And the same must be affirmed of every man.

I. Then to consider the nature of Mankind in *Moses*, the exposition of these words, *I will take away my hand*, requires three considerations: The *first*, that Men ought to desire and seek to see God; The *second*, that God's hand hindereth them to see him; The *third*, that God must take away his hand that we may see him; And will, if we seek him with a true heart.

The *first*, that Men ought to seek to see God, may seem remote from the matter, yet it is a necessary presupposition: For

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were it not Man's happiness to see God, in vain should God promise to take away his hand that man may see him.

But though this were not pertinent to the Text, I am sure it is to God's People. For whereas the main scope of the Text, and my end, is to rebuke them that will see too much of God, I fear I speak to those that seek not enough of him. For that doctrine of seeing God, to those that have their Hearts where their Treasure is, (that is, in their Chests and their Grounds) and whose God is their Lust and their Belly, is as strange and as far from their apprehension, as to a Plowman a Lecture of the Theory of the Planets. Shall we speak of seeing God's glory to those that will not look upon God's Laws, nor upon his Judgments hanging over their heads, nor upon his Goodness that feedeth and preserveth them, and inviteth to repentance? And if some of those carnal men understand these things, yet to what purpose should we help them to skrew up their minds to high contemplations of God, if they be resolved presently after to debase their minds to things unworthy, not only of God but of themselves; like Kites that will flie very high, but presently fall down upon a Carcase?

We have heard many times that in the sight of God lyeth the fulness of Man's joy
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and blessedness, and that to be deprived of his sight, is Man's worst misery, and hell it self: But do we believe it? Do we think of it? Do we aspire to see God's face in righteousness? Did we do so, and heartily, we should be other kind of Christians than we are. I am afraid some would be content never to see God, so they might never see death. But we must dye, and once at least see God's face either gracious or angry. And while we avoid to think of him, hoping that he will do the like for us, he seeth us, and with his ever-open eyes penetrates into our closest projects and imaginations.

Wherefore, as Servants stand bare, and compose themselves to reverence when their Master looks upon them; let God's looks raise our looks to him with fear: For before that great Master we stand continually. God said unto *David*, *Seek thou my face*, and *David's* heart answered him, *Thy face Lord will I seek*. There he spake not of that face of God's decree which is here opposed unto his back-parts, of which more anon; but of that of his favour, holiness, and revealed will. That *face* we are commanded to *seek evermore*, Psal. 106.

As we desire to see once God's face in comfort and everlasting glory, let us set that face always before us by our faith, fear and love, as *David* prescribeth by his example,

Psal. 16. 8. I have set the Lord always before me. In his creatures, in his benefits, in his judgments, in the course of his providence let us observe his mighty hand; And in his words and the motions of his Spirit, his comforts and directions. But if we shut up our eyes at the many evidences of his presence, here is our doom, *Isa. 26. 11. Lord, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not see; but they shall see and be ashamed.* From that sight of God followed with shame and confusion, Good Lord deliver us.

Secondly, You will say that many things hinder you from seeing God. It is very true, and I will confirm that excuse; Justification I cannot call it, for we are the principal causes of that hinderance. Three things hinder Men from seeing God, though he be ever present: Two of them are their weakness and their sin; the one makes them unable, the other makes them unworthy to see God: But the second hindrance is the chief; For man is not so weak, but he could see something more of God, but that his sin makes him unworthy of it. And therefore because the unworthy sinner should not behold God with his polluted eyes, God hath added a third cause to keep out the Godhead from his sight, which is his *hand*. *Moses* as holy as he was, yet being not freed from the state of sin, had that hand set before his eyes

eyes when God passed by. And Job found that there was some hindrance on God's part, which kept him from finding God. *O that I knew where I might find him!* (saith he, ch. 23. 3.) And a little after, *Behold I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him; On the left hand where he doth work, but I cannot behold him; He hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him.*

That Man even after his fall is naturally capable to see more of God than he seeth, we learn it, *Gen. 3.* where God turneth man out of the Garden, after he had eaten of the Tree of knowledge of good and evil, *lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the Tree of Life, and eat, and live for ever.* Indeed it followeth not thence that Man could have lived for ever after his disobedience, by eating of the tree of life; for in that place God speaks ironically of Man's presumption, not affirmatively of his power: But that he could have put forth his hand to the Tree of Life, had not God hindered him, the Text shews it plainly. For to what end had God set a Cherubin, and a flaming Sword to keep the way of the Tree of Life, but that he could have found the way thither, had he not been hindred? That hindrance, that Cherubin, that Sword, are about us to this hour; This is that hand of G O D which

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keeps us from seeing God when he passeth by.

Solomon saith, Eccl. 3. 11. that God hath set the World in mens hearts, so that no man can find out the work that God makes from the beginning to the end. That World in Man's heart is some stop that God hath put in man's frame, which hinders him from looking deep into God's ways. For God as a wise King will keep his counsels to himself. Indeed for mercy and help at need, and the knowledge of his grace, God is easie to be found by all that seek him with a sincere heart. He is nigh to all that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth, Psal. 145. 18. He is a very present help in trouble, Psal. 46. 1. But for the knowledge of his nature and counsel, the most judicious and most sanctified Students will say to him after Isa. 45. 15. Verily thou art a God that hidest thy self.

For whereas Man hath these natural impressions, (which begin to appear when Nature is somewhat scoured by grace) that he ought to seek God, and that in God's knowledge lyeth his perfection, what should the reason be that both by Nature and Grace we should attain to so little knowledge of him, of whom we naturally expect all our blessedness, while we get such an exact knowledge in Mathematicks, of which we expect no felicity? Certainly this must be
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the cause, that the stream of Man's knowledge, which ran streight to God, as to his ultimate end and soveraign good, finds a stop in the way, even God's wise hand and power which stops his current. Now that stream of knowledge meeting with a stop in its chanel, spreads it self far and wide on the sides, and overflows in matters upon the bye.

And never wonder why God will not let us know so much as we might of his nature and counsel; Neither say with those reasoners, *Rom. 9. 19. Why doth he find fault? for who can resist his will?* Consider rather whether we be worthy of seeing so much of God as we do. What think ye? Was it fit, was it just, that our first Parents after they had conversed with the Devil, and taken his counsel against God, should behold his face as freely, as before that rebellion? Is it reasonable that man whose imagination is evil at all times, be admitted to converse as freely with God as he doth with sin? Remember sinners, what your mind is busie about all the day, and then judge whether it be just before God, that after so much vanity and enmity against God (for your carnal mind is so) such defiled souls should rush when they list to behold that awful and thrice holy presence? God is too just and too wise to give way to that. And our selves, in the case we are in (if we have our senses about us) would

not desire to see God's face, lest we be consumed in a moment. Truly it is both out of justice and mercy that he puts his hand before us. Yet because no body shall complain that his ignorance hath brought him to perdition, and God's hand before him to that ignorance; Know ye that the hand of God doth not hide him altogether, no not from the very Pagans. For (saith St. Paul, Rom. 1. 19.) *That which may be known of God is manifested to them, for God hath shewed it unto them*, where he doth distinguish that which may be known of God, from that which may not be known; and saith after, that *by the things that God made, they knew enough of God's eternal power and Godhead, to be without excuse, because when they knew God they glorified him not as God, neither were they thankful.*

Besides, *thirdly*, that hand of God is not unremovable: But if we labour seriously to remove all hinderances of our own, our sins and hardness of heart, which spread a vail between God and our understandings; And if we pray to God as *Moses* did, to shew us his way, he will take away his hand so far as to make all his goodness to pass before us, and will assist us by his good Spirit to remove the vail of our sin and hardness, which is the main hindrance that keeps us from the comfortable sight of his grace in this world. We shall enjoy the benefit offered to the unconverted

converted Jews, 2 Cor. 3. 16. *When we shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away.* When by the assistance of his grace the hindrance for our part shall be taken away, God will remove the hindrance for his part; *He will take away his hand.*

II. But now when God hath taken away his hand, what may we see of him, and what not? That is exprest in the second and third part of my Text, *Thou shalt see my back-parts, but my face shall not be seen.* Where that which is observable at the first sight is, that God never removeth his hand quite away; and there is never so much of him seen, but there is more hidden, for the face is more than the back-parts.

The last of these two, *My face shall not be seen*, is a direct answer to the Petition of *Moses*, *I beseech thee shew me thy glory*; and therefore there I must begin. Yet I cannot let the order of God's goodness pass unobserved; That before he denied *Moses* that which he asked, it pleased his mercy to grant him that which he should have asked. He will not tell him, *Thou shalt not see my face, for no man shall see me and live*; before he tell him, *I will make all my goodness to pass before thee.* The comfort goes before, *I shall take away my hand, and thou shalt see my back-parts.* After that *Moses* may well hear the denial,

denial, and thank him too, *My face shall not be seen.* This is the Lord's bounty, whose benefits are instructions; who by giving us, teacheth us what we ought to pray for; who when we ask amiss, gives us aright; and though we may think sometimes that we are denied, his blessings to his children will be sure to prevent his denial.

But I keep to my reason why I expound the *third* part before the *second*; It is the direct answer to the petition of *Moses*: He asked to see God's glory; God answereth him, *My face shall not be seen.* Besides, we have need to know our faults before they can be mended. We must be taught to know our excesses in our search of God's face, before we learn moderation in contenting our selves to see his back-parts.

I insist not upon the several significations of God's face, which is taken sometimes for his favour, sometimes for his anger, sometimes for his sanctuary, sometimes for especial tokens of his presence. But here (as I told you) by comparing *Moses* his request with God's answer, we see evidently that God by his face meant his will and decree, and that *Moses* desired to see that will and decree, when he prayed to him *to shew him his way and his glory*; For by the whole dialogue between God and *Moses*, it appeareth, that the thing which *Moses* aspired unto, was

was the knowledge of his will and counsel about the people of *Israel* : Upon which God stopt him, and told him, *I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy* : As if he told him, Whatsoever I do and dispose about this people, it belongs to my will and counsel, not to thy knowledge. There you have the exposition of this sentence of God, *My face shall not be seen* ; God is his own best Interpreter.

And would to God they had learned that lesson well that pry into God's counsel, and would see that fearful face of God which no man shall see and live. Do not expect that I stand for the truth of any party. This is the truth of my tenet before God ; I believe no doctrine to be in the right that will go beyond the limits fixed in God's Word ; And I am perswaded that in determining the point of God's decree about the Election of men, both the *pro* and the *con* are in the wrong. Ponder these words of God himself, *My face shall not be seen*. It is both a prohibition, that none presume to see the face of God's decree ; and withal a declaration of God's counsel, that whosoever shall go about to seek to see it, shall lose his labour. Do what ever you can, *My face shall not be seen*. Here are then two things, First you *cannot see* God's face, that face of his decree ;
And

And then you *must not seek* for it.

Learn we *first* that we cannot see it. The busiest enquirers may justify by their own experience the firmness of that declaration of God's high Court, that *his face shall not be seen*. Who could ever define how these two certain truths can stand together, on the one side the eternity and immutability of God's decree, on the other the freedom and mutability of man's will? Who is able to conceive an absolute predestination, without making God the Author of sin; or a conditional predestination, without subjecting God's decree to man's will, and breaking that admirable chain of causes, and the great web of God's providence?

I know there are distinctions enow on both sides: But as we stand before the great Judge of the hearts and discerners of the imaginations and reasonings of our brains, let the most rational say sincerely, at least to themselves, after they have put their adversaries to Non-plus, have they satisfied their own judgments upon these doubts? And let them acknowledge the reason why they cannot be resolved about these high points; God hath said, and he is not a man that he should repent, *My face shall not be seen*, that face of my decree which must be adored behind the vail without seeing. In all Sciences there is a *non ultra*, a limit beyond which
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knowledge cannot reach, sometimes out of the shortness of the matter, sometimes out of the incapacity of our minds. But in this high and infinite matter we find, that besides the incapacity of our minds there is a stop which reason meets with, and it must of necessity go back unsatisfied. God in all ages of the Church hath dealt with the disputers about that high point, as with the men of *Sodom* that would break into *Lot's* house ; He hath smitten them with blindness, so that they weary themselves to find the Door. You that fear his name, away from that forbidden place. In vain do you grope to find God's Council-door. It is a blind Entry for you. And here you find by experience the truth of that grave sentence, *Job 26. 9. God holdeth back the face of his throne, and spreads his Cloud upon it.*

And it stands with reason that God's Counsel should not be seen ; For since God's decree is called here the glory of God, Is it convenient that sinful wretches should creep into God's glory ? And whereas the Council of Kings is called, and ought to be the *Privy Council*, should God's Council-Chamber be without either Lock or Key, open for every gazer to look in ? Well then, since the face of God's decree cannot be seen, we must not seek for it. My Text is a rule of our duty, as well as a limit of our power.

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But what! *Cælum ipsum petimus stultitiâ.* I fear that many run into that guilt of *Job*, 23. 3. for which he was so severely rebuked by *Elihu*, and next by God himself. *O that I knew* (said he) *where I might find God, that I might come even to his seat! I would order my cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments.* But the poor man spake so out of impatience in grievous torments; Wherefore they are more guilty that do so out of impatience of curiosity. Whereas instead of filling our mouth with arguments, we should fill it with the admiring praises, used by *St. Paul* in this very point, *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his Counsellor?*

Did our learned Masters bear this in mind, that none hath known the mind of the Lord, and that his ways are past finding out, they would not be so busie to build an imaginary pair of stairs, eaven within God's Council-Chamber, for the degrees of God's foreknowledge, and the several acts of his pre-ordination. And what is that but the sin of the *Israelites* in the Wilderness, who *limited the holy one of Israel?* *Psal. 78. 41.* For as they set limits to God's power and wisdom, saying, *Can God give bread? Can he provide*

provide flesh for his people? as if God had no other ways to feed them, and must follow their ways; so some in our days set limits to God in higher matters; They set him down ways for Mens Election and Salvation, which they cannot abide that he should transgress: Not being able to find out Gods ways, they prescribe him ways of their own, which is sinning against the second Commandment, for it is framing God after the likeness of men.

To find the spring of that unlawful search of the things of God, we must remount as high in the scale of times as the fatal tree of knowledge of good and evil. God forbid our first Parents to meddle with it, upon pain of death, when they were in their primitive perfection, and had knowledge enough without it. They broke the command and incurred the penalty; leaving a pregnant lesson to the World in all ages, that aspiring too high in divine knowledge, is the dangerous shelve against which perfection it self is apt to make shipwrack.

That the fruit which that seduced couple did eat turned into their substance, and that of their prosperity, it appeareth by this maxim in-born to man, that *it is lawful for him to know all that he can learn.* Divines both new and old have filled Libraries with Volumes of questions; But among all their
questi-

questions of Divinity there is this one wanting, *What questions are fit to be handled.* Illuminate and Seraphick Doctors in their enquiries of high matters, have forgotten to determine the main matter, whether those doctrines must be handled or no; Whereas it is the first question belonging to every common place.

To fix a Landmark to our inquiries in divine matters, I would recommend *two* directions; The *one* to judge of our duty by our power; The *other* to judge of our power by our duty.

For the *first*, will ye know what questions of Divinity are a forbidden fruit? Observe those where Reason is shortest, and about which there was never a general concord in the Church, but rather much bickering and bitterness: And thence conclude, Sure God doth not bless the handling of these questions, And he strikes with a spirit of stumbling those that meddle with them; Therefore I will not be busie about them.

The *second* direction is, to judge of our power by our duty; for be ye sure that you cannot but wander, as long as you transgress the limits fixed in God's Word. For since it is so, that in God's light we see light, it is not like that God will lend us his light to see that which he will not have us to see.

Let

Let my Text be the first limit out of God's Word, *My face shall not be seen*, saith God. God having said before, *No man shall see my face and live*: Take heed lest he break forth upon you, if you break through the bounds which he hath set about the holy Mount, where his glory abideth: *Scrutator Majestatis opprimetur à gloria*; saith Bernard; He that makes too bold with God's Majesty, shall be destroyed by the burning rayes of his glory.

To that I joyn this out of *Rom. 9.* where *St. Paul* having handled the matter of predestination so far as to give occasion to this objection, *v. 19. Why doth God yet find fault, for who hath resisted his will?* Presently he giveth a short stop to reason in the heat of her carriere, *Nay, but O man* (saith he) *who art thou that repliest against God?* that is, in other words, Whensoever thy reason is unsatisfied about God's dealing, let thy reverence silence thy reason, and yield the bucklers to God's wisdom.

Another of these bounds you have, *Joh. 14. 22.* The Apostle *Jude* was asking of our Saviour, *Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thy self unto us, and not unto the World?* Which was asking him a reason of his actions and God's decree. What doth *Jesus* answer him? Doth he give him a reason why he will manifest himself rather to these
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than to those? Nay, *If any man love me* (saith he) *he will keep my words*; that is, Let God's counsel alone, and stand to your duty. Mind your duty of love and obedience to me. The will of God's decree is not for you to enquire after, but the will of his command.

To the same purpose St. Paul, *Rom. 12. 3.* pronounceth this ordinance with a preface of great authority, *I say through the grace given unto me to every man that is among you, μὴ ὑπερφρονεῖν παρ' ὃ δὲ φρονεῖν.* Of which this is the right English, *Entertain not higher thoughts than you ought to entertain, ἀλλὰ φρονεῖν εἰς τὸ σωφρονεῖν, but think soberly, or season your contemplation with sobriety.* What's next? I pray mark this well, *According as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.* Now, the questions about God's decree are beyond the measure of faith; for faith *determineth not to know any thing save Jesus Christ and him crucified*, as Saint Paul, *1 Cor. 2. 2.* We may know Christ, and what he hath done for us, and what we must do for him, without vexing our brains with questions about God's decree.

III. This consideration of God's hidden face, and of our ignorance and duty arising out of it, is an excellent preparation for us to consider what God hath revealed unto us
both

both for our comfort and duty, and to apply our selves thankfully and diligently to that which God hath allowed and commanded us to know. Which is meant by his back-parts, my *third* point, *I will take away my hand, and thou shalt see my back-parts.* This doctrine is Gospel-news of joy and comfort, being well understood ; For by these *back-parts* God understands *all his goodness*, as himself said to *Moses*, *I will make all my goodness pass before thee.* Let us then learn to know these *back-parts* of God, and why he calls them so.

God shewed his back parts to *Moses* in this manner in the following chapter, *Exod.* 34. 6. *The Lord passed by before Moses, and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth ; Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin ; and that will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the Fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation.*

There you have the *three* things, in which these back-parts of God consist, which we are allowed to see in our measure, and commanded to study. The *first* is his divine power, the ground of our faith, exprest in this great name of his, *The Lord, the Lord God, the great Jehovah*, in whom we live, and move, and have our being, and well-being. Next his great *mercy*, in long-suffering, in forgiving, in

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giving, in saving his enemies, in inviting sinners by his goodness to repentance. And *lastly*, his *justice*, pouring his judgments upon sinners that would not be reclaimed by his mercy and liberality.

In these things you are allowed to grow as learned as you can; especially in the meditation of God's Mercy. There *St. Paul* would have you never to give over till you *comprehend what is the breadth & length and depth and height of the love of God which passeth knowledge*; yea till you be *filled with all the fulness of God*. Upon these back-parts of God you are allow'd to feed your contemplation; so that you turn not about to see the face, that is, that you presume not to seek into the motives and decrees of God's counsel.

Praised be God for inspiring our late blessed King's heart to confine the preaching of his Divines to God's Mercies & Commandments, Promises and Judgments: To which I may apply *Solomon's* saying, *A divine sentence is in the mouth of the King*.

But because this may seem a hard speech, that God will shew us nothing but his back-parts, as if God did put us behind his back, and turned his face from us; We must understand, that these back-parts are also his face in another sense, yea that face of God which *David* panted after, as the Hart after the Water-brooks. For God's mercy and
truth,

truth, which are called here God's back-parts in respect to the face of his decree, are that light of God's face which filleth the blessed Souls in Heaven with knowledge and love, and so with joy. And, O Lord, grant us ever to seek and ever to behold that face.

Truly, to speak properly, God is face all about, neither is there in God any diversity: But God fits his expressions to our apprehension. For Philosophy hath two ways of contemplation; The one *à priori*, which begins at the causes and motives, and beholds things as it were in the face; The other *à posteriori*, that begins at the effects and signs, which is a back-way of reasoning, but the surest for Man's capacity and increase of knowledge. The effects are the back-parts, the causes are the face. God then teacheth us here, that we may know him *à posteriori*, the back-way, by the demonstrations of his goodness and vertue; not *à priori*, the fore-way, by the causes and motives hidden in his eternal counsel.

And the truth is, that the causes of most things are lockt up in God's Council-closet. *Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas*: That felicity of knowing the causes, is for him only who is the prime Cause himself.

Come then, all we that love and fear his holy Name, let us ever seek that which God sheweth of himself; For his back-parts are

a face where we have the clear looks of his Truth, and the smiles of his Love; but withal the brow of his Justice, and the awfulness of his Majesty. O if we read and meditate well that place where God sheweth his back-parts to *Moses*; and observe how largely, how seriously, he representeth and urgeth unto us the Treasures of his Grace and Mercy; sure you shall never desire to behold another face of God than these back-parts. Here is that will fill your minds with his knowledge; Here is that will satisfie your affections with his love; Here is that will make you holy and happy. And if one will look above this, he is worthy to lose this.

That we may see so much of God, let us observe *three circumstances* of God's manifestation to *Moses*; *First*, he *proclaimed the name of the Lord*; There is no mention of any colour or shape, to teach us, that our seeing of God is attained by hearing. He had promised to *Moses* to make all his goodness pass before him; How doth he make it pass? By proclaiming his holy Name and his saving Word. Then on God's name hearken unto his Word, if you aspire to see him. Faith is the eye of the Soul: Yet it seeth by hearing. *Domine, loquere, ut te videamus.* Lord, speak, that we may see thee; Shew thy self to us by speaking to the ears of our Souls.

The

The *second* circumstance is, that *God hid Moses in the cleft of a rock*, lest God's glory should consume him : Now the *rock was Christ*, saith *St. Paul*. It

1 Cor. 10. 4.

was a figure of Christ our Saviour, whose merit doth shelter us from the dreadful Majesty of our Judg, and in the *clifts* of that *rock* did the Spouse dwell.

|| Cant. 2. 14

Let us pray to God to hide us there, else we cannot behold him but to our confusion.

The *third* circumstance is, that *Moses* appeared with the two Tables in his hand. They were not the Tables of the Law, but Tables for the Law, ready shaven and polished for God to write upon. But though he present not the Law to God, he appeareth prepared to receive it, and craving the engraving of God's finger ; having (as far as in him lay) that obedience in his hand, presenting unto God his readiness, his endeavour and diligence to obey, disposed as *David*, when he said, *I am content to do thy will, O my God.*

Psal. 40. 8.

Let us come to God with these three dispositions : First, let us hear his Word, for in speaking is he seen. Then let us seek to be hid in the cleft of our rock our Saviour *Jesus*. And withal let us bring to God the prepared Tables of our Hearts to receive his Law, desirous and diligent to keep it, and beseeching

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ing God to write it in our Hearts with the
finger of his Spirit.

Lord grant us to behold Thee in thy
Word; To be sheltered from thy Justice in
thy Son; And to have thy Law so written
by thy Spirit on the Tables of our Hearts,
that we may keep it and glorifie Thee by
our obedience.

THE END.

The Printer to the Reader.

THE absence of the Author, and his in-
convenient distance from *London* hath
occasioned these few Errata's; The Printer
thinks it the best instance of Pardon, if his
Escapes be not laid on the Author, and he
hopes they are no greater than an ordinary
Understanding may amend, and a little
Charity may forgive.

R. Royston.

ERRATA.

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commands us to pray. p. 55. l. 16. dele *And*. p. 59. l. 15.
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being; so if. p. 178. l. 24. passions, yet we should rest unsatisfied.
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& 13. dele promised unto them.

